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HOW 'GOOD PRACTICE' WHEN WORKING WITH PUPILS PRESENTING WITH
BEHAVIOURAL, EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL DIFFICULTIES (BESD) IN SCHOOL IS
PERCEIVED BY PRACTITIONERS: AN EXPLORATORY CASE STUDY OF TWO
PRIMARY ZEP SCHOOLS IN CYPRUS

By

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A thesis submitted to
The University of Birmingham
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

School of Education
The University of Birmingham
April 2012

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ABSTRACT

Pupils who present with Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD) at school have been the focus of extensive study, research and reports for many years in England. These have focused on exploring the nature of BESD, contributing factors relating to school and the schools that have shown evidence of good practice when working with these pupils. This work has reflected the situation in the English education system. In Cyprus, however, answers to questions about how best to educate pupils who may demonstrate BESD remain elusive.

In 2003, the Cypriot government approved a policy prioritising the education of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. The policy instituted 'Zones of Educational Priority programme' as it is an area-based initiative. The schools joining this programme and working under the policy have been selected based on the areas in which they are located and the local populations' socio-economic and educational status. Additionally, many of the pupils registered in these schools present with BESD. Despite this fact, up to the time the research described in this thesis was conducted; the issue of good practice when working with these pupils seems to have been neglected by Cypriot researchers and educational authorities.

The study reported here was begun in 2008 and continued in 2009. It involved two primary schools operating under the Zones of Educational Priority policy in Cyprus and is a case study of what 'good practice' is perceived to be in relation to pupils with BESD. For the purposes of this research, 22 semi-structured interviews were carried out, as well as 29 lesson observations and informal conversations. The collected data was subjected to content analysis and the findings are reported and discussed in a way that allow the readers to draw their own conclusions concerning how the study has reinforced what is already known in the area of study as well as how it has contributed to building new knowledge.

DEDICATION

To my parents who have always genuinely and positively supported all my decisions and to my granddad, who was a great inspiration to me, but sadly died from cancer.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It would not have been possible for me to have reached this point and completed this thesis without the help, support and inspiration of people around me throughout these past four years. First and foremost I would like to thank a special person in my life Dr. Bader Kurdali, and my best friend Professor George Christodoulides.

Above all, I wish to express my greatest thanks to my supervisors, Professor John Visser and Dr Natasha Macnab, for both their personal and professional support and their great patience during all the difficult times.

I am also very grateful to my family, especially my parents Andrea and Maria and my sisters Christina and Elisabeth Tryfonos, for encouraging me and providing their unequivocal support and help.

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ABBREVIATIONS

BERA	British Educational Research Association
BESD	Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties
CAMHS	Child and Adolescence Mental Health Services
CERE	Centre for Education and Research Evaluation, Cyprus
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DCSF	Department for Children, Schools and Families
DfEE	Department for Education and Employment
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
EAZ	Education Action Zones
EBD	Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties
ECforRML	European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages
EFA	Education For All
EP	Educational Psychologist
EPD	Educational Psychology Department
ESC	Educational Service Commission
EU	European Union
ICE	International Conference on Education
ILP	Individual Learning Plan
LEA	Local Education Authority
MEHER	Ministry of Education and Higher Education Research, France
MOEC	Ministry of Education and Culture, Cyprus
MOEPASE	Permanent Team of Work for the Promotion of Literacy and School Success
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Co-Operation in Europe
PEN	Priority Education Network
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SWS	Social Welfare Services
PIO	Press And Information Office, Cyprus
PICy	Pedagogical Institute Cyprus
TA	Teaching Assistant
ZEP	Zone of Educational Priority (term as used in Cyprus translated in English)

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The issue of ‘good practice’ when working with pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD) has been widely investigated in England – an overview of which is given in this chapter. In Cyprus, however, it is still not nearly so widely known about and has not been researched to any great extent. This thesis therefore explores the situation in the Cypriot education system and it is hoped that the findings will contribute to an expansion of the knowledge concerning this issue in Cyprus. Related to this is a key aspect of my investigation, which is that it documents Cypriot teachers’ and associated professionals’ own perceptions of aspects of this issue, which are clearly important but have not been sought previously.

This thesis is the result of a qualitative study that was undertaken between 2008 and 2009 and almost five years’ work before, during and since that time. The motivation for the study was to help good practice to be achieved when working with pupils with BESD. The findings are presented and discussed to:

- enable teachers to meet the challenges of working with these pupils more effectively
- contribute to a better understanding of the nature of this issue
- lead to the right policies being put in place to facilitate good practice
- help those with personal and professional interest in working with these pupils and schools to be ready to accommodate their needs.

1.1. The term ‘behavioural, emotional and social difficulties’ (BESD) in this study

The research that was undertaken for the purposes of this thesis made extensive use of the term ‘Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties’ (BESD), so it is important to define at this point who the pupils with BESD are in the context of this study. This is especially important as the study was conducted in Cyprus, where the term has not been officially adopted and applied so knowledge of the nature of these difficulties can be rather vague.

In Cyprus, the Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC) considers pupils with BESD to be those whose needs fall into the categories ‘mental disorders’ or ‘disruptive behaviour’, accompanied by emotional and/or learning difficulties (MOEC, 1992). Provision of support for these pupils is allocated according to the guidelines of the 113(I) law for the education of children with SEN (MOEC, 1999).

In contrast, the authorities in England have shown a continuous interest in the issue of BESD for decades and, in the literature, it is possible to track developments in the definition of BESD as well as the support provided for pupils with these difficulties. The meaning of the term can be seen to have changed significantly over the years, from early on when it changed from EBD to SEBD and, since, the educational authorities, as well as researchers, have addressed BESD not only in terms of definition and provision but also ‘good practice’ when working with pupils who present with these difficulties.

The adoption and use of the term BESD in this study accords with the latest developments in understanding and definition given by the English Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF, 2008). Although changes in the term’s wording over the years were made to serve specific purposes and attract attention from different professionals (Cole and

Knowles, 2011), as it has been adopted and applied in this study, BESD can best be described by the meaning attached to the new wording in the recent guidance (DCSF, 2008: paragraphs 54 and 57):

54. The term BESD covers a wide range of SEN. ... children and young people whose behavioural difficulties may be less obvious, for example, those with anxiety, who self-harm, have school phobia or depression, and those whose behaviour or emotional wellbeing are seen to be deteriorating.

57. ... their difficulties are likely to be a barrier to learning and persist.

and by Cole and Knowles (2011: 19):

Behavioural difficulties mainly caused by disrupted or unusual emotional and social development ...

It should also be noted that the term BESD is used throughout this thesis to denote the identification of the behavioural difficulties applied to pupils (aged 6–12 years) in the subject schools of the study. These pupils had been identified by teachers as having behavioural difficulties but not been referred to the Educational Psychology Department (EPD), had been referred but were awaiting official confirmation of this identification or had been identified and received statements issued by their local education authorities (LEAs) and the District Committee (as denoted by the provisions of the 113(I) 1999 and 185/ 2001 laws). In the cases where teachers had referred pupils to the EPD and requested that an assessment be conducted, they had followed the steps required by the Cypriot law of 1999 (MOEC, 1999) and the code of practice (MOEC, 2003a), but official identification had not been granted at the time the data was being collected.

1.2 Good practice when working with pupils presenting with BESD

As mentioned in the previous section, the subject of this study has not been investigated extensively by researchers and neither has the MOEC taken steps towards establishing the grounds that would enable schools and teachers work effectively with and provide appropriate learning support to pupils who present with these difficulties.

Also, it was not until after a discipline-related incident in Cypriot schools, in 1997, that the issue of behaviour and discipline in schools raised concerns to the educational authorities. This issue, as Angelides (2000: 55) stated, ‘escalated into a crisis’ with the involvement of different educationalists and politicians and resulted in the adoption of regulations for addressing disciplinary issues at schools. Despite the seriousness of the incident no further examination of the issue has been conducted by the educational authorities. Moreover up until the publication of the 2008 National Report on the Inclusion in the Cyprus Educational System, the MOEC (MOEC, 2008a) had not taken any serious action to address issues concerning behaviour of pupils of primary school age and most official documents refer to such difficulties using different terms and rather inconsistently (see Chapter 2).

In England, however, addressing the issue of difficult behaviour included efforts to provide definitions and to find ways to work with these pupils effectively. The early references to ‘maladjustment’ were replaced since the early eighties and the English Department for Education now focuses on how the needs of these pupils are to be better understood and addressed in an inclusive way, in mainstream education as much as possible. The progress that has been made, has led, gradually, to the expansion of research focusing on practice. The notion of ‘good practice’ has been added to the literature on BESD and the focus of

research has been placed on examining effective ways to work with pupils within mainstream education.

The issue of good practice is investigated in this study by using a framework developed based on a number of studies initiated by the EBD Research Team of the University of Birmingham (Cole et al., 1998; Daniels et al, 1998a; Visser, 1999; Cole et al., 2001). This framework provides schools with an understanding of good practice and illuminates elements that contribute to effective school practices when working with pupils (Visser, 1999). Aspects of this framework are discussed further in Chapter 2.

1.3 A link between pupils with BESD and schools located in Zones of Educational Priority (ZEP)

Apart from my personal and professional interests in the focus of this study a key motivation for it was the previous experience gained from working in a primary school in Cyprus with pupils presenting with behaviour difficulties. These pupils were not integrated effectively in the school life mainly due to the ongoing challenges they presented to their school and teachers. In some cases these pupils also appeared to be negatively labelled and marginalised within the classroom system. The rationale for specifically exploring how good practice is perceived by teachers and associated professionals in two ZEP schools in Cyprus is twofold.

First, it is generally agreed that ‘education is the key to a better future for all children’ (DfES, 2004: 2), but how is this to be achieved when there is no clear understanding of the nature BESD in the educational context of interest and no clear policy or guidelines in place to address them?

The ‘Priority Education Policy’, under which the two Cypriot primary schools that are the subject of this study operate (named as ZEP Schools), was launched around nine years ago and has as its objectives raising educational standards, securing access to schools and enhancing educational opportunities for those living in disadvantaged situations. While this policy was only relatively recently put into effect in Cyprus and there are anecdotal accounts suggesting the achievements of ZEP schools, there is little reported evidence that takes into consideration the perspectives and views of teachers and professionals working in these schools. Furthermore, I could find no evidence that suggested how these schools are addressing the difficulties of pupils with BESD. Yet, pupils with BESD attend these schools (Papadopoulos, 2002, 2003b; Spyrou, 2004; Spinthourakis et al., 2008). Also ‘behavioural problems’ and ‘social problems’ of pupil population were among the selection criteria set by the MOEC for districts and schools to be considered for the Priority Education Policy and be included in the ZEP schools programme (MOEC, 2005). Taking this into account, it was important, for the aims and subject of this study, to carry out the research in these rather than other schools.

Second, despite the fact that the behavioural difficulties of pupils in primary education make Cypriot teachers’ work very challenging, as Angelides (2000) notes, the issue is generally overlooked by Cypriot researchers. Moreover no research was found investigating practices developed in schools for working with these pupils or exploring the experiences and perceptions of teachers on this matter. Further, the revised Education Law of 2008 (MOEC, 2008b) does not make any reference to changes in SEN education. This means that no further developments in terms of SEN education, including BESD, have been introduced since the revised SEN law in 2004 (MOEC, 2004b). As ZEP schools are intended to help

disadvantaged pupils, many of whom present with BESD, this, too, pointed to carrying out the study in ZEP schools.

1.4 The research problem, aims of this study and emerging questions

As noted above, the motivation for carrying out this study was born of personal and professional concern for the learning of pupils of primary school age with BESD in Cyprus, plus the need to expand knowledge in this area, as it has not been adequately explored by researchers, particularly in ZEP schools. All of this led to the following main research problem for this thesis being formulated as follows:

How ‘good practice’ when working with pupils presenting with BESD in school is perceived by practitioners: an exploratory case study of two primary ZEP schools in Cyprus

Having established this as the subject of the study, I then set out to achieve the following aims:

- carry out an exploratory case study and develop awareness of a field that is largely unexplored in Cyprus
- explore the practices that have been developed for working with pupils with BESD (that is, identifying it, carrying out an assessment and reaching decisions about what sort of support should be provided)
- explore, through the perceptions of participants, whether or not elements of good practice – population, people, provision and place – have a bearing on achieving good practice in the subject schools

- raise awareness of the shortcomings of current practices, with examples from the two subject schools.

The initial intention was to undertake a piece of research that would elucidate the stated research problem and the following questions emerging from this.

- What meaning is assigned to the phrase ‘good practice’ by teachers and associated professionals working with pupils with BESD?
- What are their perceptions of the elements of ‘good practice’ (that is, population, people, provision, place) when working with these pupils?
- Are there any issues emerging from current practices?

The objective of the first two questions is to establish teachers’ and other professionals’ understanding of ‘good practice’ with reference to their work with pupils who present with BESD. In the process of answering these questions, I also sought to gather general information regarding different elements of good practice, such as:

- the procedure for identifying and supporting children with learning, emotional and/or other difficulties (MOEC, 2004c) and how this procedure is implemented in the two schools for supporting pupils with BESD
- which people would be involved (such as teachers, headteachers, educational psychologists (EPs), SEN teachers, teaching assistants (TAs) and so on), including information about teachers’ personal and professional qualities, training and the classroom-level practices

- establish the nature of existing support partnerships in order to address the needs of these pupils –key professionals and family
- establish initiatives developed at school level that have been shown to be effective with pupils with BESD
- examine perceptions of the role of place – the school and classroom – in fostering positive behaviour and a motivation to learn.

The aim of the final question listed above is to ascertain how the practices that have been developed and are being used already are perceived by the teachers and others and whether or not there are any aspects which are not working or could be improved.

Exploring the practices of a school can potentially produce a vast amount of information (Cole et al., 1998), but, by focusing purely on how ‘good practice’ is perceived in relation to the practices developed as a result of working with pupils who present challenges due to BESD, it was hoped that this would make the amount of data generated manageable.

Bearing in mind the aims of the research and the questions stated above, as well as the primary research problem, the study was designed, after an extensive appraisal of the relevant literature, to conform to high standards of ethics (that is, anonymity and confidentiality were to be maintained).

1.5 Constraints

The extent to which the research reported in this thesis achieved its proposed aims and shed light on the research problem was constrained by:

- the transferability of the term and concept ‘BESD’ from the English educational context to the Cypriot situation
- the willingness of the ZEP schools’ staff to participate in the study.

In relation to the first constraint, the term and meaning of BESD and, thus, phrases such as ‘pupils presenting with BESD’ employed in this thesis derive mainly from English literature, as it presents the clearest picture in terms of identification, assessment and procedures regarding providing support for pupils at school. Transferring this term, though widely embraced in England and other countries (Winzer, 2005), to the Cypriot context had to be done with due caution, however. This was necessary because it is not very well known or much used in the Cypriot education system. Thus, it was important, when it came to conducting the research, to take this into consideration.

As Winzer (2005: 21) highlights the use of the term BESD varies considerably from one culture to another due to the ‘complex problems that pervade the entire field of EBD’ and the widely differing belief systems around this issue. Winzer (2005: 28) also points out that:

As the constructs have questionable validity, even in their original Western context, translation to other cultural contexts is treacherous. Behaviour must be understood within indigenous belief systems.

Similarly Angelides (2000: 57) argued that:

every definition is very subjective and is based on the culture and experiences of those who try to define misbehaviour.

In the case of this research, although cases of pupils displaying BESD have been reported in Cypriot literature (see Angelides, 2000) and the Cypriot education system seems to be challenged by the presence of pupils displaying such difficulties in schools, the use of the

term BESD in the MOEC's documents and policy remains vague. Also teachers are not familiar with the term as it is not used in educational policies or SEN legislation (from reviewing official policies: MOEC, 1999, 2001, 2003a, 2004b). Perhaps among the few direct references to pupils with behavioural difficulties in the Cypriot literature is a paragraph in the 1992 circular (MOEC, 1992) that identifies different categories of special educational needs (SENs) and makes constant reference to 'adjusting difficulties' (MOEC, 1992:83) that may be the outcome of a wide range of factors. The BESD that some pupils display are identified by the 1992 circular under the heading 'Behavioural Disorders' (MOEC, 1992: 83).

In relation to the second constraint listed above (as it is further discussed in Methodology Chapter), although the gathering of data for this study relied heavily on participants' views (as one of the methods used was interviews), the process was not without difficulties. A major constraint was a variability in how willing members of the schools' staff were to participate and be recorded while being interviewed. There were cases of teachers, especially in one of the two schools, who initially consented to participate, then refused and of other teachers who did not show any interest in participating at all. This made the whole process of data collection extremely difficult.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter offers a background understanding of the issues addressed by this study, as well as findings relating to different aspects of good practice when working with pupils with BESD.

First, since both schools in this study, are mainstream primary ZEP schools, literature concerning the philosophy of a concept which was adopted as matter of policy in Cypriot education, ‘priority education’ (PIO, 2006), is examined. The ZEP programme, as part of this policy, was piloted in 2003 and then fully adopted by 2006. It was difficult to find Cypriot literature exploring issues relating to the programme, but, importantly, the Pedagogical Institute has produced an extensive report on the first evaluative study of ZEPs and the head officer of the EPD, who introduced the ZEP programme in Cyprus, has provided copies of letters sent to the MOEC and the extensive plan for the ZEP programme. These helped to build an understanding of how ZEP schools operate in Cyprus and the provisions of the programme that concern pupils with BESD, as well as an insight into the schools currently participating in the ZEP programme.

Second, this chapter then focuses on developments in the field of BESD and what support is provided for children in both the Cypriot and English educational contexts. As much information has been collected as possible to portray how the needs of these pupils have been defined and addressed over the years and what practices are currently used to help

them. Towards the end of this part of the chapter, the discussion focuses on the developments that have led to the concept of ‘good practice’.

Third, this topic is explored further in relation to advising on a framework for good practice. Various research findings on subjects relating to this framework are also discussed.

A. THE INTEGRATION OF ‘PRIORITY EDUCATION’ IN THE CYPRIOT EDUCATION SYSTEM.

2.1 The impact of international developments in education on Cypriot education

Following the 1989 United Nations’ Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN, 1989), in 1994, UNESCO adopted the Salamanca statement and accompanying Framework of Action (UNESCO, 1994). According to these documents, schools should be able to accommodate all pupils, regardless of their individual characteristics or conditions.

The adoption of the Salamanca statement and of the Framework of Action gave birth to a new concept, that of inclusive education. This highlights important principles concerning children’s education, such as having respect for individual traits that pupils may have. The documents also pointed out that among pupils whose condition(s) necessitate safeguarding are those from ‘ethnic or cultural minorities’ (UNESCO, 1994: 6, 3) or ‘from other marginalised groups’ and whose ‘social and emotional’ conditions cause concern to schools and their teachers.

The principles set out in the UN Convention (UN, 1989) and the Salamanca statement resulted in the reconceptualisation of education at an international level and formed the

grounds for the introduction of a number of initiatives (Burnett, 2008a). In the almost 23 years since the Convention, significant progress has been made towards implementing its principles and those of the Salamanca statement, including accommodating the needs of as many pupils as possible in mainstream education and creating opportunities for all to receive an education and to reach their best potential.

Cyprus was not an exception to this development. Hesitant movements towards this state, beginning early in 1980, gradually led to the endorsement of the 113(I) law in 1999, which marked significant progress in the education of children with SENs (Phtiaka, 2006; Batsiou, Bebetos, Panteli and Antoniou, 2008). During this time, behaviour difficulties were acknowledged by the Cypriot MOEC, for the first time, through the 1992 Circular (MOEC, 1992). There is no evidence, however, to suggest that pupils with BESD were included in these developments.

2.2 The structure of the Cypriot education system and of primary education

An extensive appraisal of a wide spectrum of documents, including those produced by the MOEC concerning mainstream and special education, circulars, UNESCO reports (MOEC, 1992, 1999, 2004, 2008, 2010; UNESCO, 1995) and relating to the development of inclusive and intercultural education, provided an insight into the influences and challenges, national (cultural and social) and international (world education, the EU, political developments), that the Cypriot education system is exposed to and which have provided the impetus for change (Angelides, 2004; Hajisoteriou, 2010).

Based on this literature, it can be claimed that the integration of Cyprus to the EU in 2004, the education-related conventions discussed in the preceding section (UN Convention for

the Rights of the Child, 1989; UNESCO, 1994) and the reports that had been conducted evaluating Cypriot education (UNESCO, 1995) formed the chief grounds for the ‘Educational Reform’ (MOEC, 2004a) and shaped the MOEC’s present inclusive philosophy.

Cypriot education, based on this philosophy, focuses on two major priorities:

- ‘the development of the Active Democratic Citizen’
- the establishment of:

favourable conditions for coexistence and cooperation, respect among people of different cultural backgrounds, intellectual and physical abilities, as well as combating intolerance and xenophobia in a world of increasing interaction between cultures and persons’ (UNESCO, 2008d: 1).

As part of this philosophy, many aspects of the National Curriculum have been changed (MOEC, 2010). The changes made focus on modern pedagogical methods of teaching and learning, on practices which help pupils to understand their individual learning styles, and on practices which encourage and support creativity and critical thinking (MOEC, 2003a). The introduction to the ‘Priority Education Policy’ (PIO, 2006) and ZEP programme as part of it are extensions of this philosophy and further examples of the shift in Cypriot education. These show that the efforts of the MOEC are directed at not only helping pupils with SEN but also students from disadvantaged backgrounds and bringing about equal opportunities in education, combating educational and social exclusion (MOEC, 2008d).

Regardless of these improvements, however, the education system is still highly centralised and conservative (Yiasemis, 2005; Hadjisoteriou, 2010). Decisions concerning policymaking, allocation of funds for education, as well as the operation and distribution of

services by the MOEC, depend heavily on the House of Representatives (Yiasemis, 2005). The MOEC is responsible for enforcing educational policies, employing teachers, evaluating their work (via the Educational Service Commission (ESC), which reports to the Ministry), providing in-service training courses as well as the distribution of resources. Thus, decisions regarding school staff is sometimes made without having taken into account the existing conditions in the schools to which the teachers are being appointed or transferred. Such decisions are, instead, based on a combination of criteria, such as promotion credits and status, years of employment and so on. Yiasemis (2005) comments, with regard to this, that it is impossible for the ESC to be aware of the individual needs of schools at local level and so appoint the appropriate personnel. That is because despite the changes in the philosophy of education, the structure of the education system itself remains unchanged since the Ministry of Education was founded in 1965 following the Cyprus Constitution (MOEC, 2003a).

As Figure 1 shows, all levels of education, as well as services for schools, such as the Educational Psychology Department (EPD) and the ESC, are under the authority of the MOEC. There are pre-primary, primary, secondary and higher levels of education, as well as special education.

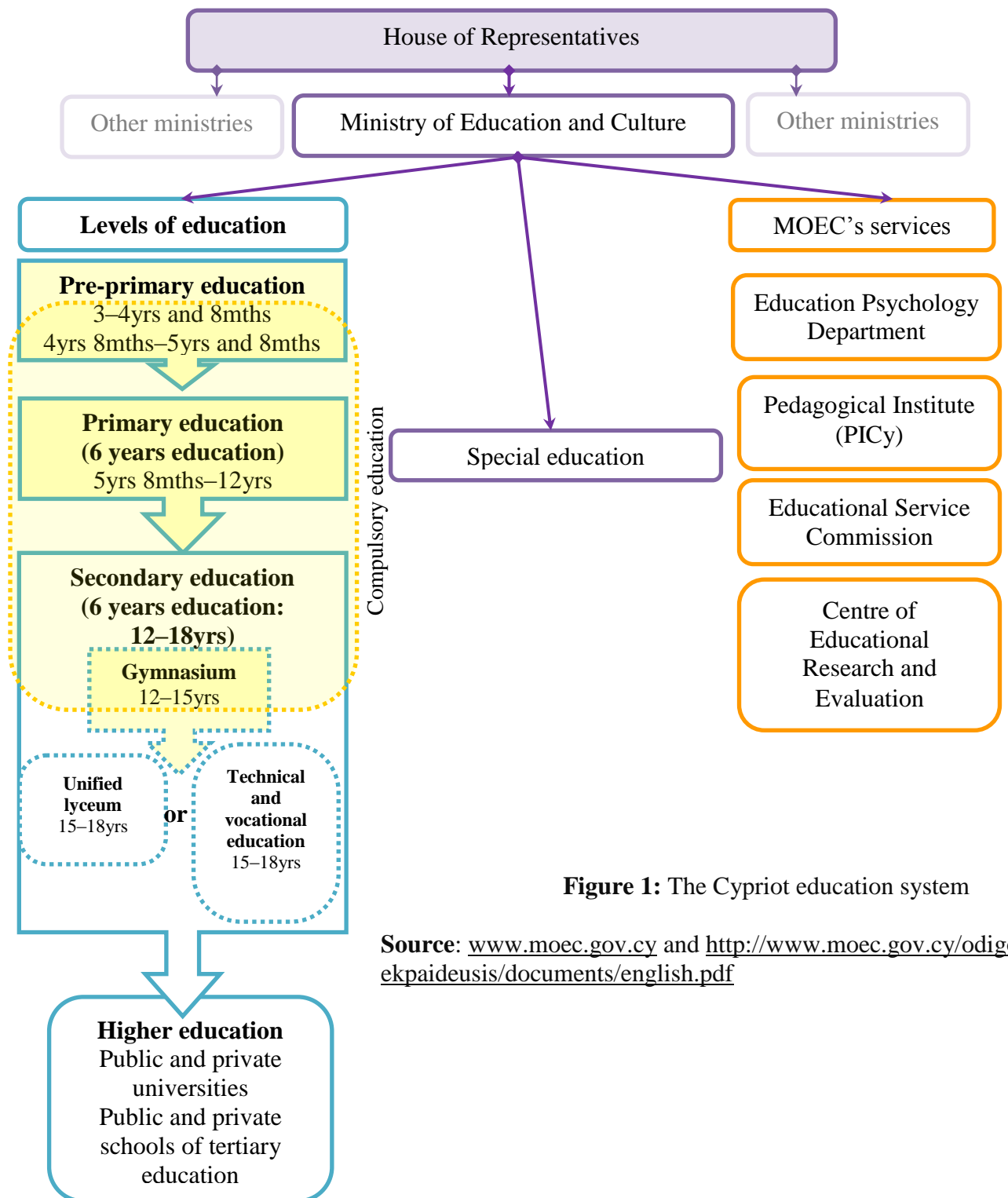


Figure 1: The Cypriot education system

Source: www.moec.gov.cy and <http://www.moec.gov.cy/odigos-ekpaideusis/documents/english.pdf>

The compulsory education of all children begins at the pre-primary level and continues with children entering the compulsory phase of education which begins with primary education

and is completed when children reach the age of 15 years old and have completed the three years of gymnasium of secondary education (see Figure 1). ZEP schools which operate under the ‘priority education policy’ work, in broad terms, in similar way as any other primary school (-six-year education programme, same curriculum guidelines) .

Following there is an overview of the structure and operation of primary education (section 2.2.1.) with an emphasis on the ‘priority education’ (section 2.2.2.) since the field of investigation is located in primary schools operating under the ‘priority education policy’- ZEP schools.

2.2.1. Primary education

Following one year of pre-primary education, which is obligatory for children aged four years and eight months to five years and eight months, children can be registered for primary education, which constitutes the first level of education. Both pre-primary (four years and eight months to five years and eight months) and primary education (five years and eight months to twelve), according to MOEC (2003a; 2010), are free, compulsory and under the authority of the MOEC which is responsible for the endorsement of legislations, policies and allocation of funds.

Figure 2 shows the structure of primary education in Cyprus and the different levels of it. Figure 2 also shows the place of ZEP Schools in the Primary education structure. Any primary school which fulfils the conditions and features that are described in subsequent sections can join in the ‘primary ZEP schools’ programme. Pupils registered for primary education are expected to complete it by the age of 12, having worked through 6 grades

(Grades A–Στ). Pupils attending ZEP schools, such as any primary school, must complete the same education programme (see Figure 2).

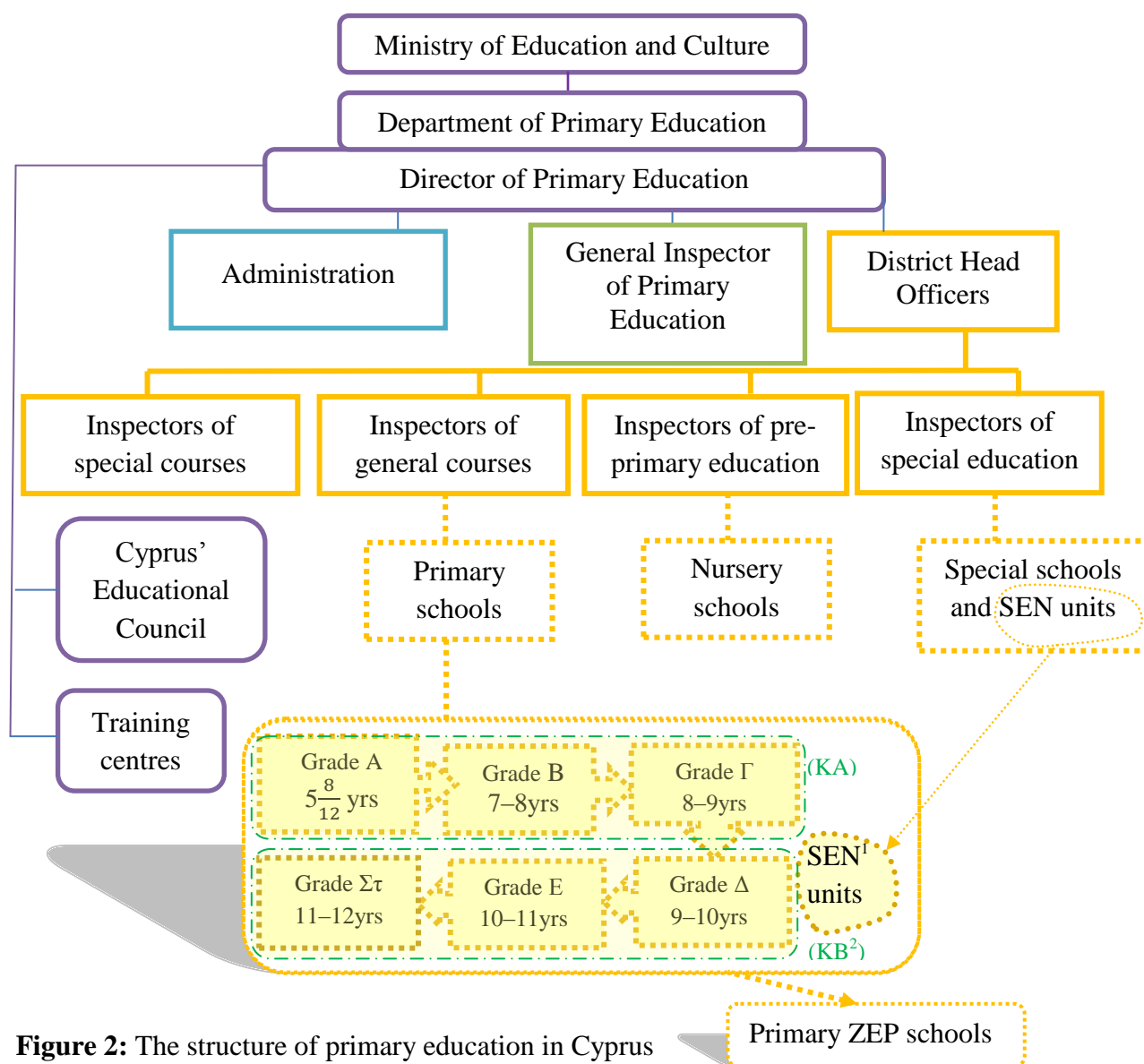


Figure 2: The structure of primary education in Cyprus
Source: MOEC (2010: 28)

The cornerstone of primary education is (MOEC, 2010: 32):

the balanced development of children's personality, with the creation of favourable conditions for the conquest of knowledge, the development of equitable attitudes and the cultivation of skills,

¹ Not all the primary schools have an SEN Unit operating in their premises. Their operation depends on the number of pupils with SEN and the severity of their needs.

² In case of schools with large numbers of pupils, the school is divided into level-groups (KA) and (KB). Two headteachers are appointed in this case.

rendering them capable of undertaking future responsibilities and action in the continuously changing world.

The curriculum and the standards set for primary education are developed by the ‘Committee for the Development of the National Curriculum’ and the ‘Office for the Development of the National Curriculum’. The office was established in 2009, having been endorsed by the House of Representatives (PICy, 2010; decision reference 67.339, 11 June 2008), and works in collaboration with the committee and the Pedagogical Institute under the authority of the MOEC.

The new curriculum that was formulated is based on a 5-day schedule (with 7 lessons each day, each 40 minutes long) and covers subjects such as Greek and English, mathematics, music, physical education and religious education (MOEC, 2010). For pupils of primary school age whose native language is other than Greek and ‘whose level of knowledge does not allow them to attend school comfortably’ (MOEC, 2010: 37), additional support is provided as part of the curriculum.

The principles and standards set in the National Curriculum are delivered in the same way across the whole of Cyprus, although, in some cases, depending on the school type, there might be some variations. Such variations are present in the timetables of ZEP schools.

2.2.2 Priority education

‘Priority education’ is a concept that was introduced in Cyprus by Papadopoulos (2002, 2003a, 2003b) and piloted in 2003.

When priority education was first introduced in the early 1980s in France, it was devoted to achieving greater equality and providing educational opportunities for less privileged pupils.

Broadly, the key objectives of this policy, according to Etienne, Tozzi and Etienne (2008) were to allow access to higher education and increase the percentage of pupils coming from underprivileged areas and SEN schools at this level of education. The launch of this policy was politically driven and from then up to the present it has undergone many changes.

2.2.2.1 The French ‘Zones d’éducation prioritaire’

A number of authors define ‘zones of educational priority’ as consisting of a cluster of schools selected due to certain criteria, such as location, lower socio-economic status and educational underachievement, working collaboratively (Dickson and Power, 2001; Hatcher and Leblond, 2001; Simpson and Cieslik, 2001). This concept has become a central aspect of the education policies of countries such as France and England. The aim, according to Hatcher and Leblond (2001), Etienne et al. (2008) and Benabou (2009), was to enable social disadvantage in schooling to be tackled through locally developed educational projects and practices tailored to the needs of each student population.

In France, the concept of ‘Zones d’éducation prioritaire’ was first spread within teachers’ unions in the 1970s and, then, by the beginning of the 1980s, it became part of the political agenda of the Socialist Party (Benabou et al., 2009). A Socialist president was elected in 1981 and the then French minister of education, Alain Savary, launched a priority education policy in 1982 and set up the Zones d’éducation prioritaire (ZEP) programme (Jamatti, 1989; Hatcher and Leblond, 2001; Papadopoulos, 2002; Loizidou, et al., 2007; Etienne, 2008).

The efforts of Savary were guided by the motto ‘discrimination positive’(Etienne, 2008:2), which was intended to create greater equality and, in a sense, enforce the philosophy of

‘education for all’ which was introduced by UNESCO (UNESCO Reports, 1994–2008) as it aimed to raise educational standards and achievement for disadvantaged populations (Etienne, 2008; Benabou, 2009). Moreover, the operating objective of the schools operating within the framework of the ‘ZEP school programme’ was to provide the schools in underprivileged areas with the financial resources and means to build local partnerships and develop initiatives that would bring this about. The ultimate goal was to ensure that these pupils could access higher education and, thus, reduce numbers of pupils dropping out of school.

In 1988, this programme was ended when an extensive evaluation study showed that there had been no change in the gap between ordinary schools and those working under the umbrella of the ZEP (Etienne, 2008). Ten years later, however, it was re-launched with the same objectives as the 1982 policy. As Hatcher and Leblond (2001) and Loizidou et al. (2007) note, the launch of French ZEPs had three major aims:

- **strengthen home–school partnerships** encourage families to have confidence in schools and become active partners in the education of their children at any given opportunity and, especially, be involved in parents’ boards
- **mobilise local action and build partnerships** mobilise local authorities and/or local educational authorities close to the education projects, plus develop local educational contracts and involve local parties in and out of school activities
- **improve support for teachers and create relevant, effective leadership conditions** organise regular meetings of schools and their partners.

In aspiring to transformation and effectiveness, both in response to the experience of the past and in anticipation of the needs of the educational system that the Priority Education Policy serves, ZEPs have undergone numerous changes since their relaunch in 1998 (Papadopoulos, 2002; Etienne, 2008). By means of a combination of strategies that target financial support, innovation in approaches to teaching and mobilising local action, the ZEPs have sought to reinvigorate themselves in underprivileged areas and improve the educational provision for the young people residing in those areas registered in the ZEP schools.

2.2.2.2 The Cypriot ‘Zones of Educational Priority’

ZEPs were introduced in Cyprus as part of the State’s policy to ‘provide impetus to physically segregated schools’ (Hadjisoteriou, 2010: 479).

Following Papadopoulos’ case study, which was conducted between 2001 and 2002, and the subsequent report and proposal plan sent to the Minister of Education in 2003 (Papadopoulos, 2002, 2003b), ‘priority education policy’ was considered to be one of the changes in the educational system that would be introduced with the accession of Cyprus to the EU. According to Papadopoulos’ *Plan* (Papadopoulos, 2003b), changes needed to be introduced in the Cypriot educational system in order to meet the EU and UNESCO’s education standards, tackle functional illiteracy and pupils dropping out of school in some areas.

ZEP schools were initially piloted in primary education in 2003 in two Cypriot districts (PIO, 2006). Following the piloting of the ZEPs, the official gazette of the MOEC (2005: 3) pointed out their significance for the education system:

It is an innovative programme ... it embraces all levels of education and encourages a support system for schools, embracing the needs of all children at all levels of education, starting from pre-primary education and extending to secondary education. [*Translated from the Greek.*]

The ZEPs consist of the Priority Education Network (PEN), which includes schools covering all three levels of education –pre-primary, primary and secondary. The schools joining the ZEP programme become part of the local PEN, which operates according to the provisions of the ‘priority education policy’. The decisions as to which schools join the programme and which PENs they belong to are made by the responsible department in the MOEC and the *Permanent Team of Work for the Promotion of Literacy and School Success* (MOEPASE). That decision takes into account criteria such as location, the socio-economic status of the families of pupils registered in schools, whether or not there are high numbers of immigrants, numbers of referrals for SEN and Social Welfare Services (SWS) and if the numbers of pupils dropping out of school, not attending or not even enrolled in school are high. Given these criteria, the MOEC planned for eight PENs to be set up between the years 2003 and 2006 in four different districts (Papadopoulos, 2003b; Loizidou et al., 2007).

The MOEC is committed to offering ZEP schools support by providing the financial resources and means to achieve their targets. Additionally, it places priority on providing extra hours of support from the EPD, SWS and SEN Department for pupils who need it.

Papadopoulos (2003b), in his *Plan*, proposes various ideas and procedures as well as basic principles for promoting effective collaboration between pre-primary, primary and secondary schools in order to guide the operation of ZEP schools. These include:

- reductions in the numbers of students per class, with Grade A pupils not exceeding 24 and Grade B pupils 20

- flexibility in delivering the curriculum and implementing the projects that have been set
- strengthening links between the school and families
- provision of advanced and differentiated support for pupils who do not speak Greek to help them learn so that they can enhance their ability to communicate and ease their integration into school and classroom activities
- progress evaluations of pupils based on their individual traits, needs and characteristics rather than final assessment
- encourage the networking of schools with local public services and bodies as well as the private sector.

In a way similar to the French PENs, the Cypriot ones are working towards implementing a three-year action plan based on a clear analysis of the needs and targets of the schools within them, including a series of actions and procedures, as well as educational practices, to successfully implement these targets. The aim of teaching practices is primarily to develop literacy skills (written or spoken), be evidence-based and include, for example:

- pupil-centred teaching and learning approaches that encourage collaborative learning
- evaluation processes that allow pupils to understand their own personal ways of learning and progressing
- ways of enabling pupils to understand what is expected of them and that help them to reach their full potential

- activities designed to enable pupils to understand and engage with them fully and competently
- teaching practices that include a higher level of expectation in order to allow pupils to progress, as well as collaborative and creative learning
- differentiation in teaching practices
- using information technology, such as computers, multimedia, the internet and learning software.

The ZEPs are specifically designed to meet the needs of pupils whose disadvantaged backgrounds interfere with their learning. Although the services of the EPD are very important in ensuring the effectiveness of the schools' educational practices, they are not the only means of achieving this. Additionally, as the schools are located in deprived areas, they require sustained and targeted support in order to reduce the effects of social and educational exclusion, as well as the incidence of violence and drug use (Papadopoulos, 2003a).

2.2.2.3 The Pedagogical Institute's study of ZEPs

The priority education policy, and as part of this the 'ZEP schools programme', was officially endorsed by the House of Representatives in December 2006 constituting the ZEP schools programme (PIO, 2006). The publication of the evaluation study by Loizidou et al. (2007), commissioned by the MOEC and the Pedagogical Institute (PICy), came a year after official endorsement was given to this policy.

The aim of the study was to survey the perspectives of all parties involved in the ZEPs and examine whether or not the targets of this initiative were being achieved. Using a mixed methods approach and surveying teachers, ZEP coordinators, headteachers, supporters, members of MOEPASE and the Network Council, school inspectors and EPs, the researchers organised their findings into the following categories:

- the extent to which the targets had been achieved
- the degree of success in completing plans
- problems encountered at ZEP level
- the climate and environment of schools.

Loizidou et al. (2007) found that there had been a general acceptance of ZEP schools by parents and the community and an increase in pupils' academic achievement, attendance, behaviour and participation in school activities. Despite this, however, they recommended changes in two areas:

- the MOEC
- schools.

First, regarding the MOEC, Loizidou et al. (2007:64) raised issues in areas such as the following:

- **Information and communication** Officers in the MOEC involved in the ZEPs were found to be ill-informed and insufficiently trained concerning the ZEPs, making them susceptible to being ineffective when their involvement is required. Loizidou et al. (2007: 64) recommended constant and systematic communication between the ZEP

schools and the MOEC, as well as between the ZEP coordinators and teachers within the schools of their ZEP:

- **Teachers' training** The training was found to be insufficient – teachers need continuing professional development (CPD) and in-service training courses throughout the school year. Emphasis should be placed on EP issues and multicultural education.
- **Permanence of position** The views of participants suggest that stability in terms of staff (them staying in a school for up to six years) contributes to effective school management, as well as the setting of learning targets and strategies to reach them effectively.
- **Learning outcomes** The study found that an emphasis must be placed on gradually improving the learning outcomes of pupils attending ZEP schools. That is because the ZEPs have focused primarily on access to education and the inclusion of socially disadvantaged pupils in school rather than learning outcomes.
- **Motivation and support by the MOEC** It was found that there had been delays in the implementation of actions that require the involvement of the MOEC.

Second, Loizidou et al. (2007) recommend changes be made at school level, including improving the communication between teachers within the same schools and PENs. The findings of this study indicated insufficiencies in the support provided by the MOEC and, as a result of this, ineffective communication between teachers.

Among the criteria used to decide that an area be included in the ZEP programme is higher than average levels of violence, other offences and behavioural problems among young

people and, thus, greater numbers of pupils presenting with behaviour-related difficulties in school. The issue of the behaviour of pupils seems to have been raised by the participants in Loizidou et al.'s (2007) study, but they neither examined this issue nor their participants' perceptions regarding effective practices for behaviour-related difficulties. Nevertheless, some participants claimed that the existing behavioural problems of pupils overtake their learning problems, making it hard for teachers to see positive learning outcomes and deal with the difficulties they present. A view that is presented in this study is that if behavioural difficulties are addressed effectively, pupils' problems in schools are likely to minimise and learning outcomes will improve (Loizidou et al., 2007).

In sum, although this evaluative study presents some of the significant outcomes of the first years of the operation of ZEPs, it gives no evidence concerning the provision for pupils who are assumed or identified to present with behaviour-related difficulties. Moreover, although there are anecdotal accounts of there being a greater incidence of behavioural problems in some ZEP schools, the issue is not addressed in this study and no other study was found in the literature that did discuss it. Nevertheless, it is important to study teachers' perceptions, especially as one of the objectives of primary education and those set for ZEP schools is to raise educational standards and enable children to reach their full potential.

2.2.3 The 2008 'National report on education'

The year 2005 marked the beginning of an important phase for Cypriot education as it was when a systematic effort and dialogue began between the educational authorities, MOEC, Cypriot scholars, the teacher's union and government on restructuring and modernising the educational system (MOEC, 2008a; Hadjidakou, 2010). In the process of bringing about educational reform since then, important documents have been issued by the MOEC,

including the 2008 ‘National report on education’ (MOEC, 2008a). The report elucidates the present philosophy of the MOEC and remarks on changes that need to be initiated to improve the quality of education in Cyprus.

The report highlights the weaknesses in the structure and organisation of the MOEC and stresses that the distribution of services had remained strictly ‘centralised, bureaucratic and inflexible’ (MOEC, 2008a: 12). Given this, it is also stressed, one of the key objectives of the educational reform that followed was the decentralisation of services, establishment of horizontal administrative structures and the examination of educational issues, practices and programmes (MOEC, 2008a: 13):

The aim is to carry out more and deeper applied research into educational issues and practices as well as objective evaluation of education programmes, to be used as a basis for the formulation and implementation of evidence-based education policy

Although the report represents the first collective effort of the educational authorities to report on the existing situation of education since the beginning of the reform of Cypriot education, it can be challenged on the basis that, once again, the issue of behavioural difficulties is not addressed in a clear way. It does, however, acknowledge the importance of addressing the issue of antisocial behaviour in schools and discusses the following actions that the MOEC is in the process of implementing to meet the ambitious educational reforms put forward since 2004 (MOEC, 2008a):

- **Establish a ‘Centre for Educational Research and Evaluation’ (CERE) by restructuring the Pedagogical Institute (PICy) (p.13)** With the aim to conduct extensive educational research on issues affecting the Cypriot educational system and to

evaluate present and future education programmes, the restructure and improvement of the PICy as well as the establishment of the CERE.

- **Teacher training** (p.14) The report discusses a comprehensive strategy to provide in-service training for teachers based on the systematic identification of training needs and planning of specific programmes to address them and upgrade their professional competences.
- **Zones of Educational Priority** (p.21) There is evidence to suggest that the programme helped to reduce the numbers of pupils dropping out of school and school failure as well as to have tackled phenomena which resulted from an inflow of immigrants and workers from various countries and achieving one of the primary objectives of the priority education policy – raising educational standards in the ZEPs (MOEC, 2008a). It is also stressed in the report that the ZEP schools programme would be further expanded between 2008 and 2009.
- **Programme for preventing antisocial behaviour** (p.24) The increasing concerns of teachers with regard to antisocial behaviour resulted, for the first time, in a section being devoted to behaviour and to actions and commitments on behalf of the MOEC for further changes.

Concerning the issue of behaviour the following was stated in the 2008 Report (MOEC 2008a:24):

Increasing concerns have been raised with respect to the antisocial behaviour of some students in the school system. To address this problem, a number of programmes have been introduced at all levels of education, aiming mainly at prevention of antisocial behaviour through raising students' self-esteem, teaching them to manage their feelings and preventing school

failure, which has been identified as a major factor resulting in antisocial behaviour.

The report also outlines actions taken to address this issue, such as assigning further study of the issue of behaviour to a committee of experts and encouraging the design of a policy taking into account the recommendations of the committee. Following this, in April 2008, a committee was set up with the objective to undertake an extensive study on the issue of antisocial behaviour in schools³.

2.3 Summary

One of the innovations introduced in the wake of the social and political developments that resulted from Cyprus' accession to the EU was the Priority Education Policy.

Literature on this field suggests positive outcomes from the first years from the launch of the ZEP schools programme (Loizidou et al., 2007; Giannaka et al., 2007; MOEC, 2008a). The same cannot be said for the education of pupils presenting with BESD as, when it comes to the teaching of these pupils who attend ZEP schools, little is known.

For this reason the following sections are devoted in exploring developments in the area of BESD in further detail both in Cypriot educational context and in the English system.

B. BEHAVIOURAL EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL DIFFICULTIES

2.4 Developments in the definition of BESD and what support is given

Given the reference made in the 2008 report (MOEC, 2008a) to pupils with 'antisocial behaviour' and the urgency of studying this issue thoroughly, as well as the lack of

³ See http://www.paideia.org.cy/upload/Arthrografia/29_04_2008_systasi_epitropis_gia_pitharxia.pdf

sufficient literature in Cyprus concerning the characteristics of pupils with behavioural difficulties, this part of the chapter attempts to redress the balance by focusing on BESD.

The literature that does exist relating to identifying BESD, the developments in the support given to pupils presenting with such difficulties, as well as a framework for good practice are discussed. This mainly concerns the situation in England, but it still provides valuable insights into BESD in terms of the problems there are in defining it, developments in the field and outcomes of research.

2.5 The case of Cyprus

2.5.1 Developments in the education of children with SEN 1929-1979

The history of SEN education in Cyprus dates back to 1929, when the ‘establishment of separate, independent and charity-run special schools’ started (Phtiaka, 2000: 1). Many developments introduced since then echo the English ones as Cyprus was under British rule for many decades –such as the *1979 Special Education Act and SEN law*, the *1992 Constantinides’ Report on Cypriot Education* and the *1999 SEN law* and gradual shift to the *inclusive education*, (Phtiaka, 2001; Symeonidou, 2005). Looking back at this history, however, it becomes evident that these developments concern SEN generally, but not BESD in particular. BESD has been considered by the educational authorities (from reviewing MOEC, 1992; MOEC, 1999) as an area requiring special education but has not received the same attention as other categories of difficulties.

The year considered to be a landmark for Cypriot special education is 1979, due to the N.47/1979 law (Phtiaka, 2000; 2001; Symeonidou, 2005). This law changed the way that the education of any pupil with SEN is delivered. Although the first special schools in

Cyprus were founded privately or by charities, this law introduced the concept of educating children with SEN in State-funded special schools or SEN classes in mainstream schools. Moreover, according to its provisions, the full responsibility for securing the right to education for children between the ages of 5 and 18 identified with special needs is to be taken by the government. Interestingly this law categorises children with special needs into four categories: ‘mentally handicapped’ (Phtiaka, 2001: 147), ‘slow learners’, ‘maladjusted’ and ‘physically and sensory handicapped’.

2.5.2 The 1992 SEN circular

The education of children with SEN has changed considerably from 1979 to the nineties. According to Phtiaka (2001: 148) the 1992 Constantinides’ Report has created a substantial impact for the changes to take place. This report challenged the existing provision for children with SEN, criticised the N.47/1979 legislation and the way special education was delivered and introduced ideas concerning the integration of pupils with SEN to mainstream education (Phtiaka, 2001, Symeonidou, 2005). Following this report a 1992 SEN circular is issued by the MOEC discussing education support for pupils with SEN.

The circular identifies eight categories of special needs, including pupils with behavioural disorders, about which it says the following (MOEC, 1992: 83):

7. Behavioural disorders

Simple problems of behaviour which are not associated with learning problems and are tackled in the regular classes are the responsibility of the teacher. In the cases of co-existing learning difficulties and behavioural disorders, a basic criterion for the decision making is the degree of disorder.

Although the circular is not clear on what a ‘disorder’ and a ‘difficulty’ are perceived to be, it does address the need to support pupils exhibiting problems with behaviour and make a decision about what help is required based on a criterion such as the ‘degree of disorder’.

It can be presumed that pupils’ needs may require support from other professionals, but, according to the MOEC, in order for a pupil to be considered to have BESD, he or she has to present with additional learning difficulties. In such a case, the pupil will receive additional support from SEN teachers. In any other case, however, a pupil’s behaviour is considered simply disruptive or challenging and something that the teacher should be able to deal with.

The lack of solid definitions in the 1992 circular suggests that there are further inconsistencies in terms of defining which difficulties are under the umbrella of ‘behavioural disorders’. This has a domino effect, creating a lack of consistency in the help provided, including which disciplines are involved in the decision-making process and what forms of support the school receives from other professionals in order to address pupils’ difficulties and so on.

Legislation that followed the 1992 circular, such as the 113(I) SEN law in 1999 and the revised N.186 SEN law in 2001, does not seem to have addressed this issue, as the behavioural difficulties of pupils are considered either ‘mental disorders’ or simply ‘disruptive behaviour’ (MOEC, 2004a, 2008a, 2008b). The fact that behaviour is described as ‘simple disruptive’ suggests that not serious actions are needed to be taken in order to meet the needs of these pupils. But is this the case in reality?

The 1995 UNESCO report 'Review of the present situation of Special Education' (UNESCO, 1995) confirms that clarity is lacking and notes there are no plans at school level to address this to improve understanding concerning behavioural difficulties. In the country summaries section three forms of educational support, provided in Cyprus for pupils with 'emotional and behavioural disturbance' (the terminology used in the report), are reported. These are 'day special schools' (UNESCO, 1995: 86), 'resource rooms' and 'support teaching in regular classes'.

2.5.3 Further developments 1999-2008

The decade following 1990 was the beginning of an important era for the education of children with SEN. Reports published concerning the English education system (Warnock report, 1978; Elton report, 1989) seem to have had an impact on education in Cyprus and it was at this time that the concepts of inclusive education, equal opportunities in terms of access to education and the right of every child to be educated in a similar way to his or her peers were introduced and gradually became part of the philosophy of Cypriot education, too. The 113/ (I)/ 1999 law (MOEC, 1999) is an example of this change although aspects of this law have been widely debated.

This law introduced the concepts of integration, inclusive education, in terms of access to education, and the right of every child to receiving education in a similar way to his or her peers. Considerable impetus for these new concepts came from the Salamanca statement (UNESCO, 1994) and the urgency that accompanied its philosophy of 'Education for All (EFA)', as well as from the 1995 UNESCO report. This last one highlights key issues concerning the future development of special education in Cyprus such as the 'early intervention' (UNESCO, 1995:89) and 'integration' and stresses that although

developments in these areas there is an urgency to be studied further. Gradually the concepts introduced by the legislation became part of the philosophy of Cypriot education, too (Phtiaka, 2001; Symeonidou, 2005).

Phtiaka (2000:1) points out that this law replaces the ‘outdated and underused 1979 legislation’ and:

with the new legislation we have at last achieved – on paper in any case – a harmony between the philosophy, the legislation and the practice of special education as they all point in the direction of integration.

This comment is still valid today as many of the provisions of the legislation introduced in the years since have, indeed, remained ‘on paper’. Practices in schools need to change in order to action the provisions.

Following the 1999 law, in 2001 the MOEC introduced new legislation and regulations. These are the N.186 law in 2001, ‘For the early identification of children with SEN’ (MOEC, 1999), and the N.185 regulations of 2001, ‘For the training and education of children with SEN’ (MOEC, 2001). The aim of these was to make the education of children with SEN an integral part of mainstream education. While the MOEC acknowledged that not all the needs of pupils can be accommodated within mainstream schools, where possible, they must be educated in the same way as any other pupils of the same age.

The N.185 regulations of 2001 (MOEC, 2001) highlight the importance of the early identification of difficulties. They stress that it is the responsibility of anyone working with pupils to report these as soon as they become evident, doing so even before school age if that is when they are noticed (MOEC, 2001). These pupils will then be evaluated by a local multidisciplinary committee and the educational authorities will decide on a provision plan.

In 2003, close to Cyprus' accession to the EU, the MOEC introduced a new, revised code of practice for the identification of SEN and ensuring that services are provided for any pupil thought to have SEN (MOEC, 2003b). It suggests 'a mechanism' – a process for identifying and assessing individual cases – and places particular emphasis on schools being active throughout this process. It also provides guidance for assessing pupils with SEN based on two major criteria – obvious disability and the diagnosis of a specialist. In addition to this, the code provides clear guidance for action to be taken at three levels.

- **Within schools** At this level, especially in primary education, teachers would generally be the first to identify pupils needing additional support. Teachers are obliged to complete a report and, at this level, all steps are taken to provide learning support at school level only and systematically evaluate progress. During this time, teachers, deputy heads, headteachers and the pupils' families are involved.
- **Within schools, but with the support of other professionals** If, after some time, usually two months, no significant progress is recorded, then schools are obliged to seek support from other professionals, such as EPs, clinical psychologists, child psychiatrists, doctors, SWS officers and speech therapists. Individual specialists can proceed to the third level of action directly in cases where pupils' difficulties have been identified as very serious before they have reached school age and those whose needs have been clearly defined as SEN based on the two criteria mentioned previously.
- **Being referred to a district committee for special education and training** Pupils are referred to a district committee if no progress has been made as a result of the actions taken at the previous two levels. At this point, in each instance, a multidisciplinary

support team is set up to evaluate the case and it then reaches a decision as to what support should be provided for that pupil.

The code of practice thus guides schools further on procedures, with the aim of enabling pupils with SEN to reach their full potential either in mainstream or special schools, including the identification and assessment of their needs, decisions regarding the provision of support and monitoring of progress. The difficulties of children who might present with BESD, however, seem to have been missed out. It is not clear, from the categorisations given, whether or not difficulties such as BESD are included in its term ‘emotional or/and other problems’ (MOEC, 2004b). It is also not clear which pupils are considered to present with ‘emotional or/and other problems’. Moreover, it suggests that most difficulties pupils have could be overcome at the first level of action, within schools, and advises that not just any child suspected of having SENs should be referred to the local authorities. That is because the process is time-consuming and expensive (MOEC, 2003b, 2004b). In this sense, it is not thought necessary for pupils who present with disruptive or other behavioural difficulties that do not fit with the guidelines provided in the code of practice to be referred or investigated further. Moreover, the difficulties of pupils presenting with BESD are considered to be addressed at school level and their teachers, with the support of their headteachers and families, are held responsible (MOEC, 2004b).

The issuing of the 2003 code of practice provided reasonable grounds for believing that there would be further developments in the education of pupils with SEN and, especially, those presenting with BESD, but the MOEC has failed to do so. It remains the case, up to 2008, that pupils with obvious sensory or mobility disabilities and those diagnosed with any

other developmental or cognitive problem early on in their lives are the most clearly defined.

Moreover, reviewing Cypriot legislation with regard to the provision of special education (MOEC, 1999, 2001, 2003a) and the literature relating to it (the studies of Angelides, 2000 and Angelides, Charalambous and Vrasidas, 2004) leads to the conclusion that, although the education of pupils who present with BESD is a persistent concern of teachers, there is as yet no appropriate policy for them or guidance in place.

This has been the situation for several years, as has been confirmed by the 2008 ‘National report on education’, which makes reference to children with behaviour-related difficulties and also introduces a new term for behavioural difficulties, adding to the existing lack of consistency in definition: ‘antisocial behaviour’ (MOEC, 2008a:24). It urges that a committee be set up to provide an evaluation of the behavioural difficulties of pupils, with the objective of designing a policy to enable intervention in and prevention of these difficulties (MOEC, 2008a). The constitution of this committee was announced in April 2008, nevertheless no updates were provided by the MOEC concerning the work that has been undertaken by this committee or any developments from the study of antisocial behaviour in schools.

Following the 2008 Report on Education, a new law was issued by the MOEC in 2008 – the N.225 law of 2008 for the compulsory education (MOEC, 2008c). It was expected that it would clarify the behavioural difficulties of pupils in schools, but it does not provide any further guidance. The sections referring to behaviour are devoted to the challenging or disruptive behaviour of pupils and do not raise the issue of causes, mainly simply referring

to a ‘mechanism’ for identifying and addressing such behaviour. Also no reference is made concerning emotional or social difficulties.

2.6 The case of England

2.6.1 Definition: key developments

As we have seen, the term ‘BESD’ does not officially exist in Cypriot legislation. The English literature concerning who pupils presenting with BESD are and what might be the best ways to meet their needs and difficulties has a far longer history, including pieces that date from the late nineteenth century. Moreover, looking back over this body of work, it becomes evident that such concern is ongoing. Whatever name is given to the needs of these pupils, the effort has always had the same focus – how to address them most effectively.

Before 1870, there was no clear understanding or guidance from the English education authorities concerning BESD and different labels were used to describe pupils presenting with behaviour-related difficulties, such as ‘mentally handicapped’, ‘imbeciles’, ‘idiots’, ‘feeble-minded’ (DES, 1955, 1978; Laslett, 1977; Cooper, 1999b). That situation was reflected in the help made available for these pupils, which was not clearly specified (DES, 1978) and also resulted in stigmatisation of any individual given such labels.

The years between World War I and of World War II increasing concerns of authorities on the education and future of pupils presenting with BESD triggered action. This is because many pupils who had no previous history of such difficulties displayed serious emotional and behavioural difficulties. During this time a term was introduced covering a range of difficulties relating to behaviour, which was ‘maladjustment’ (DES, 1955: 3) and a need for ‘child guidance’ was created. Further impetus was provided by the 1944 Education Act,

which suggested the categorisation of pupils under the term ‘maladjusted’ according to their needs, including those with BESD.

‘Maladjusted’(Cole, 2005: 32), then, was an umbrella term covering a range of difficulties and there was a specific, medically orientated understanding of what support these pupils needed – it was often described as ‘treatment’ therapy’ (Laslett, 1977:4). At the time, this seems to have helped ensure that some form of education and support was provided to address the difficulties of these pupils, but continuing concern was soon to change this.

In 1978, the term ‘maladjusted’ was replaced by ‘emotional and behavioural disorders’ (EBD) in the Warnock report (DES, 1978: 221), but, ten years later, a different term again was used in the report of the Elton Committee (DES, 1989) – ‘emotional behavioural difficulties’ showing once again the continuing concerns of the English department of Education to address this issue.

The Warnock report (DES, 1978) represents a landmark in the history of SEN education. This is because this report not only shifted the emphasis of philosophy of SEN education away from categorisation of pupils and replaced the term ‘maladjustment’ with ‘emotional and behavioural disorders’ but also because it indicated the need to review the existing educational provision in both special and mainstream settings. The Warnock committee also express the view that pupils with EBD should be able to have similar educational opportunities as their peers and stresses the importance of planned experience-sharing between pupils through curricular and extra-curricular activities (DES, 1978:105).

The Elton report, for the first time in the history of BESD, made recommendations on whole-school preventative approaches to behaviour and focused on the ethos in schools. It

also provided guidance for teachers on how to address behavioural difficulties in the classroom, covering a range of factors that could enhance effectiveness, such as parents (via, for example, home–school communication), teachers (by implementing pre-service, induction and in-service training of school staff, leadership skills and so on), schools (by improving the school environment), pupils, headteachers, educational authorities and government.

2.6.1.1 The 1994 circulars 8/94, 9/94 and code of practice

Following the Elton report, the Department for Education, jointly with the Department of Health, issued a series of circulars in 1994 offering advice with regard to the education of pupils with SEN, two of which (DfE, 1994a, 1994b) concerned pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD).

The second 1994 circular (DfE, 1994b: 4) makes reference to particular problems pupils may have that require action, such as depression, aggression, truancy, bullying, and notes that:

Children with EBD are on a continuum. Their problems are clearer and greater than sporadic naughtiness or moodiness and yet not so great as to be classed as mental illness ... There is no absolute definition.

It suggests pupils who are diagnosed with EBD present with a range of difficulties that are persistent over time and of a more substantial nature than ‘sporadic naughtiness’. It also highlights that the difficulties these pupils may have range from ‘social maladaptation to abnormal emotional stresses’ and this state continues (DfE, 1994b: 7). In addition, it notes that the presence of learning difficulties is due to the barriers they encounter, which cause them to have ‘significantly greater difficulty in learning than most children’ (DfE, 1994b:

8). Moreover, diagnosis of BESD is dependent on a range of factors relating to the nature, frequency, persistence and severity of pupils' behaviour.

2.6.1.2 The revised 2001 SEN code of practice

A revised version of the 1994 code of practice was drawn up in 2001 (DfES, 2001) and, in it, the term social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD) is used instead of EBD. Although it shows the continuing efforts of the then Department for Education and Skills to establish an understanding of BESD, it is no clearer than the 1994 circular and the description of the term is rather inconsistent (Visser, 2007).

For instance, the terms 'difficulty', 'problem', 'behavioural, emotional and social development problems' and 'mental health problems' are used interchangeably (DfES, 2001: sections 4.21, 4.31, 5.56, 6.51, 10.28). It could be argued, if all the descriptions are taken into consideration, that BESD is not only open to a range of interpretations but also can be linked with conditions related to 'mental health' or 'behavioural, emotional and social development'.

It is also stressed in section 7.52 that in some cases pupils may have interrelated needs. In addition, one aspect of BESD that was not widely acknowledged in the past guidance – the 'social' aspect – was added to emphasise the links between behavioural difficulties and the social and emotional development of pupils. Examples of the various characteristics that overlap with the social aspect are highlighted in section 7.60 (DfES, 2001: 85):

Children and young people who demonstrate features of emotional and behavioural difficulties, who are withdrawn or isolated, disruptive and disturbing, hyperactive and lack concentration; those with immature social skills; and those presenting challenging behaviours arising from other complex special needs ...

2.6.1.3. The 2008 guidance

The 2008 guidance is the latest and currently in effect. It gathers together information on BESD that was provided in previous years, particularly the 1994 circulars and guidance provided in the 2001 SEN code of practice.

This guidance, interestingly, not only establishes further the social aspect of BESD introduced by the 2001 code of practice but also alters the order of the letters, from SEBD to BESD, and covers a ‘wide range of SEN’ and ‘abilities’(DCSF, 2008: 13, paragraphs 54 and 57) but overstressing once again the behaviour difficulties. Within this updated umbrella term are included pupils whose behavioural difficulties are not that obvious (anxiety, children who self-harm, who have school phobia) as well as those ‘whose behavioural or emotional well-being are seen to deteriorating’ or demonstrate aggressive behaviour (DCSF, 2008: paragraph 57). It also suggests that ‘learning difficulties and behavioural difficulties are in a two-way relationship with each other’ (DCSF, 2008: 14). In addition, whether or not pupils are considered to have BESD depends on factors such as the severity, frequency and persistency of their difficulties and the impact they have on their emotional well-being.

The guidance additionally stresses the relationship between social status, culture, gender and so on and BESD (DCSF, 2008: 5, paragraphs 60–64):

Research shows higher rates of BESD in socially deprived areas. Boys are four times more likely than girls to be identified as having BESD ... Travellers of Irish heritage and Gypsy/Roma pupils are over-represented among many categories of SEN, including moderate learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties and BESD.

2.6.2. Provision: Developments following the Warnock Report

In the decades that followed the Warnock report of 1978, several reports and Education Acts (Education Acts 1981, 1996; Elton report, 1989, for example) brought developments not only in terms of definition but also in the provision of support offered to pupils with BESD. These were partially influenced by the needs of the education system in England and partially by developments in education worldwide (such as the UN Convention for the Rights of Children, 1989, and Salamanca statement) and contributed to shaping the current guidance.

The Warnock report (DES, 1978), not only replaced the term ‘maladjustment’ with ‘emotional and behavioural disorders’ but also placed much emphasis on reviewing what was provided for pupils in both special and mainstream settings and clarifying issues with regard to those with SEN. The report discusses the need for teaching and learning approaches that give attention to pupils’ individual learning needs. One of its main arguments, as Cooper (1999) highlights, is that all pupils with SEN (including those presenting with BESD) should have an opportunity to be integrated and educated in mainstream schools when possible (Cooper, 1999). The Warnock Committee also stated (DES, 1978: 4, section 7.14):

On the basis of the evidence received and our own observations of good practice in schools ... we have identified a number of conditions for the effective provision of special education in ordinary schools. The character of a school, its size, premises, staffing and organisation all affect its capacity to make effective special educational provision.

Cooper (1999) commented with reference to this point that pupils’ individual educational needs are paramount and placement should always be decided based on this.

The Elton report (DES, 1989) shows the continuing efforts of the government since the 1981 Act to address the issue of behavioural difficulties and discipline in schools. It also shows that its vision is to develop future practice from the lessons learnt from successful schools.

The Elton Committee expressed the view that there is no ‘single or simple’ solution to addressing the issue of behavioural difficulties in schools (DES, 1989: 195). It also rejected any views that BESD is caused exclusively by each individual pupil’s factors (that is, ‘no child is an island’, DES, 1989: 64). It therefore provided a new philosophy, that behavioural problems in schools is a complex issue and may be influenced by the school environment, including the relationships between teachers and their pupils (DES, 1989: 64, section 2.26):

Every incident has a range of immediate and longer-term causes. Events in the classroom are influenced by a complex mixture of expectations, attitudes, regulations, policies and laws which are shaped by forces at work in the classroom, the school, the local community and society as a whole. The most central of these influences is the relationship between teacher and pupils.

Based on this, the Elton Committee recommended that addressing the needs of pupils with BESD requires systematic and ‘concerted action’ from all concerned parties because behavioural difficulties are likely to be the outcome of various factors, including school factors. Therefore, improving schools’ and teachers’ effectiveness will enable behavioural problems to be addressed effectively in the future.

Although the report mainly discusses issues relating to a lack of discipline rather than BESD, many of the ideas have since proved to be influential (Cooper, 1999b). An example of this is the issuing of the 1994 circulars and SEN code of practice by the Department for Education (DfE, 1994a, 1994b, 1994c). Building on the recommendations of the 1989 Elton

report, the 1994 circulars updated existing definitions of BESD and provided further guidance to schools on how to develop effective whole-school practices for working with pupils with BESD.

The roles and responsibilities of teachers, headteachers and supporting professionals regarding how to maintain good behaviour and discipline are identified in the 9/94 circular (DfE, 1994b). This circular, as Cooper (1999: 37) stresses, emphasises the provision of 'differentiated learning experiences' according to the individual needs of pupils. It also provides extensive suggestions for the development of a series of measures to improve the provision of support offered to children with BESD in mainstream schools.

Based on the principles that pupils with SEN 'require the greatest possible access to a broad and balanced education' (DfE, 1994c: 13) and their needs must be accommodated where possible in mainstream education, the importance of effective liaison between LEAs, Social Services and professionals from different disciplines regarding placements and funding is highlighted.

The 2001 code of practice provided descriptions of BESD that built on previous guidance (the 1994 code of practice DfE, 1994c) and showed, once again, the English government's inclusive education policy, 'focused on helping all children to realise their potential' (DfES, 2001: 1), as much as possible, away from the segregated settings of special schools.

Despite the considerable emphasis that has been put on inclusive practices and concerted action to support the learning of pupils by the 2001 revised SEN code of practice, according to the 2005 Ofsted report 'Managing challenging behaviour' (Ofsted, 2005), pupils with BESD remain one of the most challenging groups schools are required to manage. The

report recommends focusing on the quality of teaching. Most importantly, though, it expresses the view that, as what constitutes behavioural difficulties is not clearly defined, it is difficult to gauge the full extent of the problem (Ofsted, 2005). Moreover, based on the outcomes, the authors of the report provide a series of recommendations for improving behaviour and working more effectively with pupils who present with BESD, such as consistency of approach, the development of behaviour policies, a positive ethos and the provision of support and training for staff.

Many of the recommendations of the Ofsted report have been implemented in the 2008 guidance (DCSF, 2008). In developing the guidance, the DCSF ‘updates and replaces’ (DCSF, 2008: 4) previous guidance –that is, the 9/94 1994 circular and code of practice and the 2001 SEN code of practice. The aim of this new revised guidance was to explain the current legal duties as well as to advice on ways to enhance good practice when working with pupils with BESD. Its key objective was the improvement of achievement, health and emotional well-being for those pupils whose BESD are ‘persistent and provide obstacles to their learning’ (DCSF, 2008: 10).

C. GOOD PRACTICE

2.7 The notion of good practice

Looking back on the developments that have taken place in the field of BESD in terms of its definition and what kinds of support should be provided, it becomes clear that the educational authorities in England have been focused on clarifying understanding of BESD and providing guidance on implementing good practice. The fact that schools in England, as Visser (2005: 228) argues, are subject to ‘a rigorous inspection process’ has led to a gradual

recognition of what constitutes good practice. What, then, is good practice and how can this be implemented when working with pupils presenting with BESD at school?

As Blandford (2005: 105) highlighted:

Good practice is not an imaginary phenomenon, it happens in the majority of schools on a daily basis ... Teachers should feel confident that they are able to provide a safe, secure environment in which children learn.

The literature has many accounts relating to good practice, to schools' success with pupils with BESD and ideas and recommendations as to what works best with these pupils. Research has shown that good practice when working with pupils presenting with BESD is a rather broad and multifaceted issue, but a worthwhile progress has been recorded. There is a view that the cornerstone for addressing the needs of these pupils in mainstream schools is to bring about a changes in the way teaching and learning are implemented, the ethos of schools and, as Cole et al. (1998: 164) concluded, how schools operate with these children 'does make a difference'.

Central to the discussion that follows, therefore, is a framework developed by the Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties Research Team of the University of Birmingham (Cole et al., 1998). Additional studies are brought into the discussion when relevant to explore the literature on different elements of good practice.

2.8 A framework of good practice

Between 1994 and 1998, Ofsted identified a number of special schools as failing and others as presenting 'serious weaknesses' (Cole et al., 1998: 1). The growing concerns of the English government concerning this situation and the sustained efforts of the educational

authorities added impetus to research being undertaken to discover which practices schools were finding effective with pupils with BESD.

In response to this situation the EBD Research Team at the University of Birmingham undertook a series of studies at national and international level exploring provision for pupils with BESD (such as Cole and Visser, 1996; Daniels et al., 1998a; Daniels et al., 1998b; Cole et al., 1998; Cole, Daniels and Visser, 1999; Cole, Visser and Daniels, 2001; Cole, 2001; Cole, Daniels and Visser, 2003; Daniels et al., 2003).

Beginning with an overview of changes and developments in legislation and provision that have taken place in the field of BESD since the mid 1970s, Visser and Cole (1996) reported on the initial work of the EBD Research Team. The importance of their paper lies in the fact that it presents the Department of Education's findings concerning the support provided for pupils with BESD at the time of the 1994 circulars (DfE, 1994a, 1994b).

Two years later, Cole and Visser (1998) examined the effectiveness of EBD schools in relation to their work with pupils with BESD. They reflected on the literature on the schools' effectiveness and their findings from a national survey of special schools and suggest that no matter who is providing support for pupils with BESD, there is a need to (Cole and Visser, 1998):

- clearly identify the values, aims and objectives of that support
- take into account the families' views as well as those of the pupils
- have a management team that sets high achievement targets for both pupils and staff, plus clear and feasible behaviour standards for each pupil.

Moreover, in comparing mainstream and special schools, Cole and Visser emphasise the importance of both the ‘people factor’ and staff members’ skills in enhancing the work undertaken with these pupils.

Following this, Cole, Visser and Upton wrote *Effective Schooling for pupils with EBD* (1998), which records the outcomes of an extensive examination of special schools providing for pupils with BESD. They identify aspects of good practice and suggest a framework (see Figure 3) that highlights the four key ones:

- population
- people
- provision
- place.

Each of these aspects has a considerable bearing on what the outcomes are, but ‘people’ is the most influential – that is, the people who work with these pupils, their personalities and ‘what they plan and do seems to matter the most’ (Cole et al., 1998: 146). The findings of studies relating to each of these four key aspects of the framework that are relevant to the purposes of this study are discussed in the sections that follow.

Working effectively with pupils with BESD

Population

- **Pupils**
- **Families** the support of parents and carers should be won and sustained. Programmes need to be aimed at strengthening the links between the families and the school and establishing collaboration.

People

- **Management team**
- **Teachers, TAs** it is important that they have appropriate values, empathy, training, skills and experience, personal and professional qualities, are able to offer a broad and balanced curriculum and quality practice.
- **Other professionals** need to have the commitment of and practical support from the governors, LEAs, EPs, Social Services and other agencies.

Provision

- **Policies** behaviour and learning policies need to be drawn up and applied.
- **Whole-school and classroom approaches** need to be devised and implemented.

Place

- **Schools** a welcoming, positive and motivating school milieu is important.
- **Classrooms**

Figure 3: Aspects of good practice for pupils with BESD

Source: Adapted from Cole et al., 1998: 147

2.8.1 Population: family, pupils with BESD and schools

Cole et al. (1998) discuss two facets of the population aspect of good practice that their study has shown have a considerable impact on how effective schools are for pupils with BESD. That is, the *pupil* and the *family*. The findings of their study have shown consistently that the role of the family must not be overlooked.

Two points of view concerning family are discussed at this point. The first concerns the impact that poor family relationships can have on the behavioural problems of pupils and the second concerns reflections on the literature on the issue of home–school partnerships.

Family is an essential factor in nurturing pupils' learning and self-esteem because it is a key agent on pupils' 'intellectual and social, emotional and behavioural development' (DCSF,

2008: 16). While any positive contribution parents make affects their 'behaviour, adjustment and well-being in school' (Chazan et al., 1994) in a positive way, equally, deprivation of any kind or 'maltreatment' of pupils can have adverse consequences on their emotional and cognitive development (Chazan, Laing and Davies, 1994; Bennett, 1999; Cole et al., 2001; WHO, 2007).

The work of Jones (2008) seems to confirm this argument. As Jones (2008: 421) explains, maltreatment is the 'antithesis of adequate caregiving and parenting'. Risk factors contributing to this, the literature suggests, are the socio-economic status (poverty and low income), housing conditions, size of family, divorce, cohabitation with a stepmother or father, segregation, early separation from the mother, poor parental interpersonal skills, violent partners and parental criminality (Chazan et al. 1994; Bennett, 1999; Jones, 2008). Dowling (2010) adds to these families living in difficult conditions, such as parents from ethnic minorities, asylum seekers, parents with mental health or addiction problems (drugs or alcohol).

Evidence provided by the World Health Organisation (WHO, 2007) for Europe not only confirms the above risk factors but also suggests a number of negative outcomes for children who have been subjected to maltreatment, such as low-self esteem and poor-self-worth, educational failure and emotional and behavioural problems (anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress, poor social interactions and aggressiveness, withdrawal). WHO (2007) distinguishes four forms of maltreatment:

- physical abuse
- emotional and psychological abuse
- sexual abuse

- neglect.

In some cases, children may be subjected to more than one of these. The commonest form of maltreatment is physical and emotional neglect, such as failing to provide the essentials for living – clothing, food and so on – exclusion or abandonment, as well as insufficient parental love, care and affection (Jones, 2008). According to the same data, two out of five children in Europe are maltreated by more than one person at different times in their lives and, in the majority of the cases, those responsible for this are family members (WHO, 2007: 8). A 2007 report discussing the magnitude of this issue suggests that, in England, only, ‘24 children in every 10,000 of ages 0–17’ (WHO; 2007a:8) are on the child protection register, due to their cases having been reported to the authorities for actual or serious suspicion of abuse and/or neglect (WHO, 2007a: 8).

Given that, for many cases of pupils with BESD, their behavioural problems might well be associated with the aforementioned factors in the family environment (Bennett, 1999; Cole and Knowles, 2011), the question arises, in what way can a relationship be built between the school and parents so that these pupils can benefit from it? It can be the case that, because of family factors, these parents are very hard to communicate with and get ‘on side’ (Cole and Knowles, 2011: 203), but the benefits that can be gained mean schools must be dedicated to pursuing better home–school links.

In 1997, the English Department for Education, in its report ‘Excellence in Schools’ (DfE, 1997), in the chapter ‘Helping pupils to achieve’, outlines its strategy for increasing parental involvement in schools. Different actions are described to bring this about, enabling parents to have a voice in decision-making and be informed and updated (DfE, 1997). Also, the 2001 SEN code of practice affirms parents’ rights at all stages of their children’s learning

and suggests, regardless of their impact on their behavioural difficulties, parents hold important information and are valuable partners in working effectively with their children. Whatever the problems in establishing good home–school links, then, it is worthwhile endeavouring to do so as this helps teachers to have positive attitudes to parents and not make presumptions concerning their capacity to support their children’s learning (DfES, 2001).

In 2008, the BESD guidance (DCSF, 2008) updated the above Department for Education’s strategy and the recommendations made in the 2001 SEN code of practice (DfES, 2001). It suggested that the development of a home–school partnership plays a vital role in promoting a ‘culture of co-operation’ between families and schools and helping pupils to reach their potential (DfES, 2001: 16). In line with this, Greenhalgh (2001: 23) argues that, in focusing on how to work with parents, it is important also to recognise the feelings parents may have and that BESD ‘is not always or solely the result of poor parenting’. This follows on from Greenhalgh’s earlier work in which he expressed the view that often teachers attribute pupils’ difficulties to serious problems in the family environment as if they would like ‘to avoid guilt’(1994: 70) for the pupils’ underachievement. Further, Greenhalgh (1994: 70) argues that this kind of attitude prevents teachers from making efforts to establish good home–school links even though there is a wealth of research evidence to show it makes a significant difference:

the impact of such partnership is enhanced where teachers are able to take account of the dynamic of interaction between pupils and their parents.

Returning to Cole et al. (1998), they support the approach that, unless there are suspicions of maltreatment, then schools should do whatever they can to gain and maintain the support

of pupils' families. Evidence from their study suggests that different forms of contact, such as regular phone calls on their home number, positive letters and visits, were appreciated by parents and help in building good relationships with the families that benefit pupils. Lacey (2001: 145) points out that, while a successful home–school partnership is hard to establish, 'when you find it you can achieve almost everything'. Even though Lacey's comments refer to schools working with pupils with SEN other than BESD, the cases discussed in her study that have been used by professionals and proved to be effective with SEN are also enlightening for those working with pupils with BESD. For example, Lacey (2001) provides various case studies of approaches being used to encourage home–school partnerships, such as:

- a parents' lounge in school where parents can feel comfortable and talk informally with a professional or their children's teachers
- home–school diaries where children can recall their activities and write them in their diaries
- having a professional parents can talk to about the problems they encounter and discuss plans for working with their children
- visits at home and talking with parents.

A common feature of all these cases is the time spent with families and the empathetic attitude towards parents' problems. Similarly, Sir Alan Steer's report (DCSF, 2009), in which he reviewed the progress made regarding pupils' behavioural issues since 2005, suggests, based on the findings of a study undertaken between 2008 and 2009, that in the

cases where the involvement of parents in the school became parental engagement in their children's learning, they had the most positive impact.

The National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT, 2006) reported teachers' views concerning home-school relationships. Teachers highlighted the quality of their relationships with families as being very important when dealing with pupils' mental health problems. They stated that families can be a valuable source of information about pupils' well-being, but also, often, withhold information about important events, saying, 'there are parents who are in denial'. In addition the relationship between parents and teachers is unpredictable, which can be because parents have their own problems (NASUWT, 2006).

Phtiaka (2001, 2006), a Cypriot researcher, has drawn similar conclusions, having raised the issue of home-school partnerships and, through interviews, explored the views of parents of children with SEN on the implementation of the 113(I) law and their relationships with their children's schools. Phtiaka (2006) identified a gap in the literature – that is, the views of parents on this issue have been largely unexplored. Phtiaka's findings seem to confirm those of an earlier study she carried out. The findings of the 2001 study suggest that the partnership between home and school is problematic and often they blame each other for the academic failure of pupils or their behavioural problems at school. Similarly, Phtiaka's (2006: 181) outcomes suggest that:

Parents from lower socio-economic or educational status and foreign nationals who live in the country, ... they are often totally absent from their children's educational process.

In addition, Phtiaka (2006) acknowledges how essential a good home-school partnership is for the successful education of pupils with SEN. The accumulated findings of this study

suggest that there is lack of communication between parents and schools, as well as disagreements and poor levels of cooperation.

2.8.2 People: teachers and associated professionals

Teachers are the key individuals when it comes to the ‘people’ aspect of the framework for working with pupils with BESD. Their role is complex but important. Their work and thinking go beyond the classroom walls. As the Elton report (DES, 1989: 67) highlights, however, the ‘classroom is the most important place in the education system’ and what happens there decides how well the purposes of the system are achieved.

The literature also suggests that teachers’ personalities, qualities, ethos, skills and enthusiasm for their work, as well as their capacity to develop a positive classroom environment, consistent and highly motivating learning experiences for pupils, are all reflected in pupils’ learning and progress and have a positive impact when working with pupils with BESD (Chazan et al., 1994; Greenhalgh, 1994; Visser et al., 2001; Visser, 2005, Blake, 2005).

The next sections reflect on the literature concerning the ‘people element’ of the framework of Cole et al. (1998) –the teachers.

2.8.2.1 Teachers’ and staff’s personal and professional qualities

Staff and teachers’ personal and professional qualities and values are considered by Cole et al. (1998) to be key factors contributing to good practice when working with BESD.

Similarly, for many years, scholars in the field of BESD, such as Laslett (1977), Chazan et al. (1994), Greenhalgh (1994) and, more recently, Cole et al. (1998), Daniels et al. (1998a),

Daniels et al.(1998b), Cole, Daniels and Visser (1999), Cole, Visser and Daniels (2000), Cole and Visser (2000), Visser, Cole and Daniels (2002), Visser (2003; 2005; 2005a), Rogers (2005) and Cole and Knowles (2011) have emphasised that the quality of the relationships between teachers and pupils contribute substantially to working effectively and addressing the difficulties of these pupils. Similarly different reports of studies commissioned by the English education department such as the Elton Report (DES, 1989) emphasise on the professional and personal qualities of those working with pupils with BESD in establishing good practice.

For instance, the Elton Committee in 1989(DES, 1989: 69) stressed that:

there are a few teachers for whom training and advice will not be properly effective because their personalities do not match the needs of the job. It is clear, however, that the majority of teachers can become more effective classroom managers as a result of the right kinds of training, experience and support.

Similarly, Greenhalgh (1994) argues that teachers' personal qualities are important not just because these pupils call on every last bit of their resilience and patience but also because their needs require teachers *to 'go beyond their desks'* when working with them. Daniels et al. (1998a: 53), too, found that not only is a broad knowledge and understanding of the nature of BESD needed but also a willingness to make 'personal sacrifices on behalf of these pupils'. They outline different qualities teachers and other members of staff need to have, such as a:

- genuine interest in pupils with BESD
- clear understanding of their needs and circumstances
- eagerness to devoting time to listen to and talk with the pupils

- attentiveness to the individual worries and views of pupils
- flexibility, honesty, tolerance, being forgiving, showing warmth and acceptance and being interested in and excited about working with these pupils.

In addition, Daniels et al. (1998a: 54) suggest that effective members of staff working with pupils with BESD are those ‘radiating an air of knowing what they are doing’, of confidence. It was commonly observed throughout their study that confident teachers were more decisive in their actions and usually tended to be those who had received specialist training and had a full understanding of the nature of the needs of pupils with BESD. Interviews reported in this study also reveal that honesty and genuineness aid the development of trust and the building of relationships between staff and pupils.

The same study provides evidence that, apart from confidence, it is also important to establish warm relationships with pupils with BESD. This, according to those interviewed, can be achieved by means of ‘words, non-verbal contact, empathy and commitment’ (Daniels et al. 1998a: 54). Cole et al. (1998), similarly, asked different key personnel about the qualities they look for when appointing staff and they mostly mentioned personal qualities and aspects of personality, energy and level of commitment. Additionally, they were asked, to describe personal and professional qualities of teachers in their schools that distinguish them from good mainstream practitioners. Among the most-mentioned were:

- good planning, organisation and structure, 56.1%
- consistency and fairness, 39.7%
- good sense of humour, 36.1%

- enthusiasm, interesting, challenging, passionate, stimulating, 29%.

Empathy and patience, ability to form positive relationships, confidence, clarity in boundaries set, honesty and experience in working with pupils with BESD were also mentioned.

Daniels et al. (2003), in their study of young people permanently excluded from mainstream schools, examined the pre- and post-exclusion processes, support provided and the effects on the life chances of 193 young people from 10 different LEAs. They also explored the indicators for interventions that were shown to have an impact on these young people. One of the key findings was that the relationships between excluded young people and their teachers were much better after they had been excluded than before, with 111 young people showing a statistically significant improvement. Many of the families interviewed pointed to qualities of the teachers as being related to this improvement in relationships, including ‘calmness, patience, empathy, respect and understanding’ (Daniels et al., 2003: 94).

Visser (2005: 233), reflecting on his years of experience in the field of BESD, introduces the notion of ‘eternal verities’ – that is, principles strongly linking different approaches with the achievement of successful outcomes when working with pupils with BESD. Among these ‘verities’ are those that can be directly associated with teachers’ qualities, such as transparency in communications, empathy, equity and building positive relationships. Visser (2005) concludes evidence on what works and why when addressing the needs of pupils with BESD is poor, but research findings suggest that schools exhibiting ‘good practice’ (Cole et al., 1998) with a ‘caring, learning and sharing ethos’ (Visser et al., 2002) are actioning these ‘verities’. For example, Visser suggests that if pupils with BESD find it difficult to form and sustain positive relationships due to having experienced ‘family

trauma' (Visser, 2005: 236), a successful practice when working with these pupils must be one based on creating feelings of safety, trust and care. In this case, an adult working with these pupils acts as a positive role model and building such positive relationships may result in reconsideration of their value base.

2.8.2.2 Training

Training of both teachers and other members of staff working with pupils with BESD is an issue that was raised in Cole et al.'s (1998: 147) study and is one of the key aspects presented in the proposed framework –'skilled, experienced, committed teachers and members of staff' working with these pupils. Their findings suggest that there are links between effective practice and effective pedagogy provided by teachers who are confident in their subject knowledge, well-organised and ready to adjust their work to meet individual needs.

Various researchers in the field of BESD in England have raised the issue of teachers' training and associate effective practice with evidence-based knowledge, skills and understanding of BESD developed by means of training (Cole et al., 1998, 1999; Cole and Visser, 2001; Royer, 2001; Steel, 2002; Cooper, Smith and Upton, 2003; Royer, 2005). In Cyprus, however, most of the literature focuses on teachers' in-service training needs or the quality of training with regard to the educational needs of pupils in mainstream education (Karagiorgi and Symeou, 2007, 2008; Symeou, Karagiorgi, Rousounidou and Kaloyirou, 2009). This cannot be applied to teaching pupils with BESD, however, as the challenges that emerge vary and have no specific pattern or prescribed way of coping with them. Teachers must be able to employ methods for dealing with these problems, which should be 'calming, firm, fair, supportive and constructive' because, very often, the BESD is the outcome of

having been extensively exposed to poor disciplining techniques or ‘inappropriate models for behaviour’ (Montgomery, 2001: 182).

Targeted in-service training and continuing professional development (CPD) programmes are considered to enhance teachers’ effectiveness generally (Steel, 2002; Royer, 2005; Karagiorgi and Symeou, 2008), but for those teachers working with pupils with BESD it is essential because it expands their awareness of and responsiveness to the needs of these pupils (Greenhalgh, 1994; Cole et al., 1998; Visser, 2003). Nevertheless, it seems, from Cole et al.’s (2001) findings, that headteachers of schools for pupils with BESD showed a preference for the personalities of staff over specific training when choosing who to employ. In addition, Cole et al. (2001: 19) note that some preferred to ‘mould receptive school staff in their own way’. Cole et al.’s (1998) earlier study also showed that a significant percentage of the respondents indicated no members of their staff were funded to attend long-term training courses. Moreover, Ofsted (2006: 10), in its report, highlighted the link between training and good teaching and support: ‘good continuing practical training for mainstream staff enabled some very good teaching and support’.

In terms of the Cypriot context, although the in-service training of teachers has been at the centre of the discussion in a number of studies (Karagiorgi and Symeou, 2007, 2008; Symeou et al., 2009), none has been conducted to specifically explore teachers’ training relating to teaching pupils with BESD. However there is evidence to suggest weaknesses in the way CPD is delivered in Cyprus and inadequate teachers’ training (Karagiorgi and Symeou, 2007; 2008, Hoplaros, 2004; Loizidou et al., 2007; MOEC, 2008). A study was undertaken, however, that explored the views of teachers with regard to the need for in-service training of teachers in Cyprus (Karagiorgi and Symeou, 2008). The views of

teachers in this study seem to suggest weaknesses in the way CPD is delivered in Cyprus. Participants claimed that teachers may need training in order to ‘survive’ the classroom and attend training courses at times and in contexts suited to their personal and professional needs (Karagiorgi and Symeou, 2008). Nevertheless, the way in which training is given at present does not offer such potential and does not enable teachers to acquire new knowledge and skills that they can then transfer to their teaching.

In discussing their findings, Karagiorgi and Symeou (2008: 252) summarise the teachers’ responses and say that most of them characterised the existing training system as ‘inadequate, non-existent, unsatisfactory, poor or insufficient’. The researchers also stress the non-existence of mechanisms to assess how well the outcomes of the training align with its objectives and the importance of making alterations to it. They also make some suggestions regarding some aspects of in-service training, including the form and time that this should take, and note that the teachers highlighted the link between undertaking in-service training and improvements in school practice.

Some of the teachers in Karagiorgi and Symeou’s (2008) study also called for a decentralisation of the way in which in-service training is provided. At present it is up to the MOEC to decide on different aspects of the organisation and delivery of the courses.

As to the training of teachers working in Cypriot ZEP schools, there is hardly any research exploring this topic, apart from Loizidou et al’s (2007) study. Their study presents similar findings to those of Karagiorgi and Symeou and points out the significance of undertaking training for teachers working in these schools. Loizidou et al. (2007) acknowledge the link between adequately trained teachers working in ZEP schools and those showing evidence of good practice. In light of their findings, they suggest that teachers must undertake training

courses, either at the beginning of the school year or at various points during the school year.

2.8.2.3 Teamwork – establishing partnerships with key professionals

Another key element in the framework for good practice is the support provided by different associated professionals. The findings of Cole et al. (2001) suggest that schools exhibiting good practice are most commonly supported by EPs and also work with other professionals to meet the needs of pupils with BESD. In addition, they receive support from social workers, educational welfare officers and mental health professionals, as well as speech therapists, counsellors, psychotherapists, the police and others as appropriate.

Working in partnership with professionals from different disciplines is as important to success as establishing links with pupils' families and training teachers. Although the latter two aspects are extremely valuable in terms of meeting the educational needs of pupils with BESD effectively and enabling them to achieve their potential, schools exhibiting good practice also open their horizons up to include external agencies (DfES, 2001). That is, meeting the pupils' needs requires 'flexible working on the part of statutory agencies' (DfES, 2001: 135) to provide high-quality support based on their individual requirements and traits. The guidance given by the code of practice (DfES, 2001) and the earlier Elton report (DES, 1989) values among others, the LEAs' support, including EPs, Social Services, the voluntary sector and mental health services. The Elton report (DES, 1989: 67) acknowledges the necessity of building partnerships with organisations, groups and individuals to keep 'order' in the classroom:

They should not face this task alone. They need and deserve support from many other organisations, groups and individuals.

It also associates the good management skills of teachers with developing positive relationships with pupils and mutual respect. These points were central to the discussions in several texts in the years that followed this report (Cooper, 1993; Cole et al., 1998; Daniels et al., 1998a; Cole et al., 2001; Visser, 2003).

The literature discussed so far has mainly focused on support partnerships with different professionals at school level – which agencies the schools work with, the advantages of working with them and the nature of the support that different professionals can offer to pupils with BESD. Thomas (1992), however, presents an alternative point of view concerning this support by looking at that which is given in the classroom and provides an extensive discussion of issues relating to classroom teamwork and those external agents who are invited to work alongside teachers, offering help, and the tensions possibly arising from this.

Beginning with the statement ‘good teamwork is notoriously difficult to achieve’, Thomas (1992: 1) explains, by means of a thorough examination of the issue of classroom teamwork, that calls for the integration of pupils with SEN within mainstream education have given rise to a new development in education: the movement of additional adults into the classroom. This movement has brought with it not only different dynamics in terms of support being provided for pupils with SEN in classrooms but also generated a challenge concerning the nature of that support, the definitions of the roles of these adults, the collaboration and relationships between these adults and the teachers.

Classroom teamwork in mainstream schools, as Thomas (1992) suggests, is a positive development, but, in some cases, the different personalities and roles may conflict with each other, compromising the effectiveness of the work that is being done. This is because, as

Thomas (1992) argues, its effectiveness rests on the relationships and shared goals of the people involved, as well as a common set of understandings of their roles and the expected outcomes of their work. Thomas notes, there are issues that obstruct the effectiveness of teamwork and these are mainly related to managerial, ideological, practical or personal mismatches or tensions in the area of the definition of roles.

A study by Atkinson et al. (2002) highlights similar complexities in multi-agency working. The outcomes of their three-phase study, which examined 30 multi-agency initiatives and recorded 139 interviews, concerned key factors and skills for successful multi-agency work in schools and pointed out the significance of the following:

- commitment and willingness to involve
- understanding of roles and responsibilities
- common objectives
- communication and sharing of information
- good working relationships.

Atkinson et al. note that, despite the challenges involved in achieving effective multi-agency work, once achieved, its impact is of significant value. A range of benefits was reported for children and their families, especially in the area of attainment and access to education (Atkinson et al., 2002). The benefits most commonly mentioned by the interviewees, according to Atkinson et al. (2002), are:

- quicker access to services
- improvements in educational attainment and support for families
- early identification of difficulties and the application of intervention, which led to a minimising of the need for more specialised agencies to get involved.

Despite such positive impacts, the teachers also commonly reported that their work alongside other professionals led to an increase in their workloads and there was more pressure.

A report commissioned by the then Department for Education and Skills and conducted by the Mental Health Foundation examined the joint work of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and schools (Pettitt, 2003). This report differs from Atkinson et al.'s (2002) study in that they examined multi-agency initiatives generally – their aims, roles and responsibilities, impacts and challenges that were encountered and how they were overcome – whereas the report focused solely on the work between the CAMHS and schools.

Using a mixture of methods, the report writers examine case studies, look at the joint work of the CAMHS and schools and the factors that contribute to or trigger barriers to form, preventing effective practice (Pettitt, 2003). A wide range of practice and structures were identified, but the commonest for the work took was 'consultation and support for teachers' (97%), as well as 'direct work with pupils' (70%) and 'work with parents of children' of early years and primary school age (Pettitt, 2003:25). Other activities included training, support and advice for teachers; help with behaviour management, attending annual reviews of pupils with BESD, joint meetings with staff and parents (Pettitt, 2003: 26).

An important aspect of this study was the examination of the impact of the joint work. Participants in this study, according to Pettitt (2003), generally considered that they could benefit from the joint work they were doing with CAMHS as it was considered to increase their awareness and early detection of problems, offered better access to CAMHS' services and achieved more appropriate referrals for cases of difficult pupils. The respondents also

appeared to be very positive about the impact that this had on the pupils. The direct work had had a positive impact on the pupils' emotions (happiness and peer relationships) and their performance (academic achievement, exclusion and attendance).

The joint work with CAMHS was of particular importance to the teachers, who spoke of feeling confident in their role when working with CAMHS and the value of knowing that they had support. The participants, especially teachers, also appeared to be very optimistic about the joint work with CAMHS and mentioned that knowing pupils with BESD would be seen by a professional and work outside classroom made them feel more confident about their work. It was not only, as teachers, mentioned the fact that someone would work with these children but also they were enabled by this to concentrate on teaching and, additionally, discuss problems they encountered when working with pupils with behavioural difficulties (Pettitt, 2003).

A recent case study by Tryfonos (2006), which was conducted in a Cypriot primary school, examined three cases of pupils presenting with BESD. This study showed the importance of key professionals working as a team for providing comprehensive support for pupils presenting with BESD. Participants reported that teachers were working in collaboration mainly with the EP, SEN teacher, SWS officers and the District Committee. However it was also reported that one of the three cases was a boy who was excluded (to a school setting established for pupils with BESD which could not be addressed by a mainstream school provision) before the end of the school year due to the seriousness of his difficulties and the challenges that his behaviour was posing to the school –the school staff, his teachers and peers. As Tryfonos (2006) concluded, although teachers in the school stressed the

importance of working in collaboration with key professionals, this collaboration failed and this was the primary reason for the exclusion of that boy.

From the above discussion about schools working in collaboration with specialised services or professionals, it can be concluded that having additional support at school and classroom levels is not without its challenges, but the work of individual teachers with pupils with BESD can potentially be improved as a result. There are certainly different issues that need to be addressed in the process of working in partnership with different professionals, but it is not utopian to believe that this collaboration can have positive impacts on pupils' academic performance and behaviour.

2.8.3 Provision

2.8.3.1 The procedure for identifying and supporting pupils with BESD

Given that the behaviour of some pupils is not random and has a meaning (Greenhalgh, 1994), teachers are required to be able to make assumptions as to what the possible meanings are of an exhibited behaviour. The more accurate these assumptions are, the more precisely the needs of these pupils are met. In order to be able to do this, there is a need for teachers to constantly monitor pupils' behaviour. This monitoring process allows teachers to form the basis on which 'necessary and effective responses' (Greenhalgh, 1994: 96) are made, which, in turn, are conducive to healthy emotional growth. Greenhalgh adds that a key element in managing this is effective communication between pupils and teachers. From this teachers can learn much and pupils can become more responsive.

What Greenhalgh (1994) suggests is that there is an initial identification of pupils' needs, which needs to be done in the early stages of the education of any pupils with BESD.

Teachers take perhaps the first steps in actioning this process, which, as the revised code of practice (DfES, 2001: 44) notes, is an ongoing one that:

takes account of the wide range of abilities, aptitudes and interests of children.

The 2001 Code of practice emphasises that nursery and primary education are two continuous stages and progress records of pupils attending early-years settings are kept (DfES, 2001), so it is likely that many pupils will have their needs identified during these first years of their education. Assessment of the progress of pupils does not then stop once their needs have been identified. The code of practice (DfES, 2001) clearly states that planning, teaching and assessing pupils' needs are the fundamentals of a continuous process to meet those needs.

Daniels et al. (1998a) report examples where the fact that nursery and primary schools were housed in the same building made it possible for the early identification of difficulties and then the application of interventions. Even so, they found that there were some cases of pupils whose needs were not identified and, for a number of participants in this study, identifying difficulties early on and intervening with support are considered significant. In addition, an important percentage of EPs stated that it was their intention to make time to respond to schools' requests for assessments to be made, but claimed it is not possible to do so for some pupils in more pressured urban schools (Daniels, 1998b).

In discussing assessment, planning and monitoring for individual pupils, Cole et al. (2001: 27) explain that defining BESD for pupils is rather problematic – that is, they need to be given a thorough assessment of their needs in order to 'ensure the accuracy of identification as BESD'. Effective schools, according to Cole et al. (2001), engage the pupils themselves

in planning, target-setting and reviewing activities in order to maximise their commitment. Regarding this last point, an Ofsted report (2006) supports this idea as it found that the most effective schools ensured a high level of involvement of pupils, including decisions about behaviour and learning.

In the Cypriot context, there have been hardly any studies carried out to explore the identification and assessment of needs and decisions regarding the provision of support for pupils with BESD or ones that have looked at how aspects of this process enhance good practice for these pupils. Official documents have, however, provided guidelines and instruction on how this procedure should be applied in order to provide effective support for any pupils with SEN such as the code of practice (MOEC, 2001).

2.8.3.2 Classroom practices

The Elton report remains, to this day, among the most important and worthwhile documents in English education (Cooper, 1999c). It was requested by the government as a result of a mass outbreak of violent behaviour and indiscipline by pupils in schools (DES, 1989; Cooper, 1999). The Elton Committee concluded in their Report that (DES, 1989: 3.2, 67):

In order to learn well, children need a calm and purposeful classroom atmosphere. ... Teachers must be able to keep order. If they cannot, all the children in their charge will suffer.

Given the circumstances and nature of the problem that instigated the report, a survey of teachers' views (also including English and Welsh LEAs, governors, schools and school staff) was conducted – the largest of its kind. Its importance does not lie in its size, however, but in the recommendations the resulting report made and the fact that many of the ideas

posited formed the basis for further actions by the State in terms of policy and support provided relating to BESDs, as well as further research.

In the Elton report, ideas such as classroom management and positive classroom climate, were highlighted. The classroom, it said, is ‘the most important place in education’ (DES, 1989: 67) and therefore teachers are responsible for keeping ‘order’ in it. Although the term ‘order’ sounds negative – implying disciplinary measures and actions to manage the behaviour of pupils – the report goes a step further and discusses, in the light of the findings, the need for teachers to acquire good management skills to apply during teaching so as to aid the creation of a positive classroom climate. Teachers are also recommended to create good relationships with their pupils, encouraging them to learn and behave by working with them (DES, 1989: 69).

Authors such as Cooper (1993) echo this philosophy of the Elton report – the creation of positive relationships between pupils and teachers. Cooper (1993) further suggests that teachers should make pupils feel they are wanted and create opportunities for all of them to succeed. In other words, teachers should be able to understand pupils’ interpretations of and purposes in the world, see through their fears and aspirations, understand their emotional difficulties and build appropriate classroom-based approaches in light of these because pupils tend to learn when they have developed a sense of ‘ownership of knowledge they acquire’ (Cooper, 1993: 30).

Thus, teachers are required to develop student-centred classroom approaches because they are the tools and raw materials for generating experiences and building new knowledge (Cole et al., 1998). Cole et al. (1998) also point out, among other issues, that, apart from a thorough theoretical understanding of the nature of BESD and classroom management, the

first priority of teachers when teaching pupils with BESD is to acquire an understanding of the individual needs of their pupils. The focus should be placed on approaches to managing and motivating pupils (Cole et al., 1998: 111):

Committed, organised, knowledgeable teachers are as effective with pupils with EBD as with other children – although they will probably have to work harder, sometimes ‘smarter’, making more sacrifice, and more consciously attempting to address pupils’ expressive or affective needs to achieve success.

Cole et al. asked respondents in this study to give their opinions on what classroom approaches would create a supportive, effective environment and aid pupils’ learning. They seemed to consider very important improving self-esteem and giving pupils support to fill the gaps in their literacy and numeracy. They also considered it very important to pose pupils challenging but appropriate curricular expectations and differentiate teaching.

In light of their findings, in later research, Cole et al. (2001) identify factors that aid teachers’ work with both ‘ordinary’ pupils and those with BESD. They found that, in effective schools and pupil referral units (PRUs), teachers manage to make teaching ‘a therapeutic experience’ (Cole et al., 2001: 31). This observation seems to reflect Greenhalgh’s (1994: 92) earlier discussion, in which he considers teachers to be the ‘significant others’ in the lives of pupils and as holding a ‘faith’ and showing a sense of trust that the pupils will change and ‘become less troubled’ (Greenhalgh, 1994: 92, 93):

Working with disturbing children in educational settings involves finding and teaching the ‘teachable’ part of each child and making alliances with the positive aspects of the child’s interaction, interests and attainments.

Cole et al. (2001) make similar claims based on their findings. They suggest that skilful and differentiated teaching pays attention to the levels the pupils are at, guides them to the next

logical level, pays attention to the different learning styles they have, uses constant positive reinforcement and avoids a punitive and confrontational attitude towards them. In addition, they do not suggest that teachers focus only on motivating or monitoring external behaviour with behavioural approaches, such as making use of point systems, rewards and sanctions. Rather, their findings suggest that, although it has been common for teachers to use such approaches in the classroom, these need to be combined with cognitive approaches which seek to alter the cognitive processes in pupils' thinking and encourage the raising of their self-esteem. This last point was also highlighted in their earlier study (Cole et al., 1998).

2.8.4 Place

2.8.4.1 Classroom milieu

Cole et al. (1998) argue that it is important to have an attractive physical environment, to create and maintain school settings that are pleasant, comfortable, attractive and well-resourced. That is because, as Cole et al. (1998: 133) state, such settings allow pupils' needs for 'privacy, dignity, independence, choice, rights and fulfilment' to be met. Moreover, they foster well-being, set the foundations for cognitive and psychological development and create pro-social experiences for children (Cole et al., 1998; Cole, 2006). This argument is supported by Konu et al.'s study (cited in Frederickson and Cline, 2009), which found a strong relationship between characteristics of the school milieu (such as the condition of the school, social relationships, means of self-fulfilment and health of pupils) and pupils' well-being.

Similarly, the Elton report (DES, 1989) highlighted the importance of pleasantly decorated, looked-after schools and the link between this and pupils' behaviour. As the Elton Committee commented in the report (DES, 1989: 4.114, 115):

Classrooms and corridors were well decorated. ... In primary schools particularly there were colourful displays of pupils' work on the walls. Staff commented to us about the benefits to the school's general atmosphere of a welcoming environment. The appearance of other schools was bleaker and less well cared for.

Cole et al.'s (2001) findings indicate the need to improve the physical environment of special schools and PRUs, including classrooms, pupils' common rooms and boarding accommodation. Indeed, both of Cole et al.'s studies (1998, 2001) seem to be consistent with the earlier Elton report in linking improvements in behaviour with a motivating school environment and suggesting that simple changes in schools, such as in colour, light, form and space, may positively change pupils' feelings about school and education.

D. CONCLUDING REMARKS

2.9 How meaningful and useful is the term BESD?

Despite the term being widely used in the field of education, there was some concern about using it in this study because of the issue of labelling pupils. That is because, in the field of BESD, divergent views and concerns have arisen alongside the developments in defining it and given rise to a school of thought that is apprehensive about the effects of labelling on individuals, raising issues of stigmatisation, rejection, social marginalisation and false expectations.

Chazan et al. (1994: 9), having devoted their book to highlighting the findings of studies pertaining to the identification and assessment of pupils with BESD and provision of support for them in schools, express also their concern relating to the effects of applying a label to them such as BESD:

It is always dangerous to have preconceptions about children, their behaviour and progress. To accept a label for any child may well change the way she/he is viewed. Labeling can lead to extra efforts being made to help, but it can also lead to an acceptance, or even exaggeration, of patterns of interaction which may be definitely unhelpful.

They seem to be raising a question here that is similar to others raised in a number of studies. That is, they challenge the legitimacy of the term BESD and the consequent possibility of the stigmatisation of any pupil with difficulties in school (Thomas and Glenny, 2000; Ecclestone, 2004; Thomas and Gremin, 2005; Osterholm, Nash and Kritsonis, 2007).

Undoubtedly, applying any label to any pupils is a challenge for those applying and those receiving it. For those applying the label, the challenge lies in what should follow this event, while, for the pupils who will bear the label, the challenge lies in how this will affect their relationships with their peers, teachers and their social environment in school going forwards. To this end, although Chazan et al. (1994:189) state that the 'help offered becomes the important consideration, rather than the label attached', the findings of Osterholm et al. (2007) recommend otherwise. The outcomes of the latter study suggest that the pupils labelled as 'learning disabled' (Osterholm et al., 2007: 6) are affected by the designation they receive and, consequently, experience emotional and physical isolation. Similar conclusions can be made for those labelled as pupils with BESD. Indeed, Cooper's (1993: 3) study is an example of the negative impact of labelling on pupils with BESD: 'the

label itself is less important than the influences which produce the label and the experiences which pupils have as a consequence of bearing the label’.

Taking this argument further, Thomas and Glenny (2000: 284) consider the use of the term ‘need’ artificial, too – that it serves not the needs of children but schools’ need for ‘calm and order’. Thus, how effective and appropriate the support services are can also be challenged. It is stressed that although the philosophy and the professional orthodoxy relating to the education of pupils with special needs has shifted away from the segregationist practices of the past to inclusive ones, the reality is different. Pupils, once officially identified with BESD are, almost instantly, treated as different. As Thomas and Glenny (2000: 289) note, their experiences of school life change and the designation given to them:

shunts them sideways from a comprehensible and predictable system of practices and procedures that results in rewards and punishment, to an alternative set governed by alternative professional personnel – psychologists, counselors, social workers, psychiatrists – who listen, analyse and understand. They move into the world of *the referred*.

Although these authors have a point, it is also the case that the developments around the issue of BESD during the past decades have brought academics, policymakers, educators and teachers to the point where practices are reviewed, approaches are amended and education is moving towards putting in place better practices. As Chazan, Laing and Davies (1994: 189) argue, the application of the term ‘does allow discussion to take place, “whole-school” policies to be set up and individual programmes planned’ and it also encourages a mindset within which the nature of the behaviour of these pupils is understood. This mindset combines not only educational aspects but also medical and legal ones, allowing professionals from different disciplines to be involved and use their expertise to establish a

legislative framework and build support structures that help to address the pupils' learning needs, motivating and supporting them (Thomas, 2005).

2.10 Cross-cultural transferability of the term BESD – a research implication

In light of the preceding discussion about BESD and issues relating to definition, the provision of support and good practice, it must also be taken into account that in Cyprus, there is no solid definition in place and the provision of support for pupils with BESD is not well-defined.

Winzer (2005) and Ghosh, Moffield and Orellana's (2010) work offers a cross-cultural comparison of what BESD is considered to be. As Winzer (2005: 23) argues, the determination of behavioural difficulties is 'mediated by cultural lenses', frameworks within which socially acceptable actions and behaviour are expressed or explained. He further provides evidence from a comparative study that suggests there are factors such as cultural constraints on the expressions 'difficulty' or 'disorder', inconsistencies in the standards that are used for defining SEN and BESD and differences in parental conceptions and beliefs about children's education and management and these all contribute to the ways in which frameworks are constructed within which pupils' behaviour is viewed. Given these frameworks, the ways in which different types of behaviour may be understood or deemed acceptable or not in one culture may not be viewed in the same ways in another culture.

Furthermore, as Ghosh et al. (2010: 167) suggest, unlike genetic and overt disabilities, BESD is an 'invisible disability' that has long been ignored. This has happened because it is a subjectively constructed reality based on judgements as to what is 'tolerable', 'appropriate' and 'desirable' (Winzer, 2005: 23).

The examination of the subject that the present study offers has been a challenging process because not only does it raise the issue of BESD in an educational context in which it has long been ignored (that is, in Cyprus) but also it represents an attempt to transfer and explore the understandings of and views on this issue discussed above to that particular educational context. Despite the benefits of undertaking this study, such as enhancing awareness and broadening the knowledge of BESD in the schools taking part, there was the very real danger that the participants would have difficulties fully understanding the terminology ‘BESD’ and ‘good practice’.

Such lack of knowledge has arisen because no systematic action had been taken to fully address this issue up until the ‘National report on education’ (MOEC, 2008a). Moreover, the review of what literature does exist in the preceding sections suggests a lack of a firm definition and familiarity with this term in the Cypriot context (Angelides, 2000). Also as noted earlier, the legislation in Cyprus regarding pupils with SEN does not provide a consistent picture of who pupils with BESD are.

The effect of this lack of knowledge and understanding is that practices in schools may exclude these pupils rather than effectively address their difficulties (Angelides, 2000; Phtiaka, 2000; Angelides et al., 2004; Tryfonos, 2006; Angelides and Michailidou, 2007). Indeed, there are studies that provide evidence to suggest Cypriot teachers’ lack of familiarity with the term BESD and good practice when working with these pupils leads to them being labelled in a negative way and stigmatised in their schools (Angelides, 2000; Tryfonos, 2006).

Raising the issue of good practice in an educational context where there is no clear guidance as to the support that should be provided for pupils with BESD triggers another question –

how will participants understand the practices that are currently in place? This issue and that of the definition of BESD needed to be given careful consideration— matters further complicated by the fact the schools taking part in the study are located in an area where people are already negatively stereotyped due to their social, cultural and ethnic backgrounds (Demetriou and Trimikliniotis, 2007).

2.11 Summary

The discussion in this chapter has provided an account of the main developments in the field of BESD in the education systems of both England and Cyprus, in terms of defining the term itself and the provision of support, as well as aspects of ‘good practice’ when working with pupils with BESD. The final part of the chapter focused on studying the literature concerning the framework of ‘good practice’ developed and introduced by Cole et al. (1998).

In the last decade, the MOEC in Cyprus has demonstrated a growing interest in addressing the issue of behaviour. This issue has not been rigorously examined, however, due to the absence of a solid definition or descriptor that would enable the identification of pupils with BESD. The ‘National report on education’ (2008) represents possibly the first systematic effort on behalf of the MOEC to delve into the causes and nature of BESD and ways in which to address the issue effectively.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY, RESEARCH DESIGN AND TOOLS

Introduction

Having outlined the research problem explored in this thesis in Chapter 1, together with an overview of its rationale and aims, this chapter discusses the methodology used and research design chosen for the study. Practical issues pertaining to the fieldwork undertaken to collect the data, the analysis performed and decisions regarding the reporting of findings are also outlined.

3.1 Methodological considerations

3.1.1 The conceptual framework for the design of this study

In discussing which key points must guide research design, Lankshear and Knobel (2004: 30) highlight the significance of having a sound conceptual framework as a foundation for the research and point out that:

without a carefully constructed conceptual framework there is nothing to hold the study together as a coherent ‘whole’. Likewise, a research design necessarily builds around some theoretical position or other. This theoretical position must ‘go with’ the key concepts, and both must ‘fit’ the research question.

In other words, the way research is designed and conducted reflects its conceptual framework – that is, the worldview, the philosophical assumptions, of researchers with regard to the nature of their research (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Dunne, Pryor and Yates, 2005; Creswell, 2009). This worldview, also known as a paradigm, is founded on assumptions regarding ontology, epistemology and methodology.

Researchers' epistemological and ontological understandings have a 'formative effect'(Dunne et al., 2005: 14) on their preferred designs and methodologies. Creswell (2009: 3), in a similar way to Lankshear and Knobel (2004), discusses three types of research paradigms – qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods – and highlights the importance of researchers thinking through their worldview and assumptions before undertaking research.

Qualitative research – favoured by advocates of a qualitative paradigm – places value on exploring experiences via the accounts of individuals and establishes an understanding from the meanings assigned to those experiences (Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007; Stake, 2010). Qualitative researchers engage in a process that involves conducting fieldwork at participants' settings, performing inductive data analysis and then interpret what they have observed. In discussing the nature of such research, Lankshear and Knobel (2004: 30) note that:

It might involve watching what people do, talking to them about it, asking other people about it and trying to understand and explain what is going on, without any recourse to numbers or statistics or variables whatsoever.

The quantitative paradigm, instead, puts an emphasis on objectively examining the research subject and *deductively*, after statistical analysis of data, verifying or rejecting the initial hypothesis or assumption (Muijs, 2004). This paradigm stresses a scientific method of investigation and formulates the results in terms similar to those of an experiment. Researchers engage in an 'experimental or quasi-experimental validation of theory' (Cohen, 2007:10) and abstraction of reality by means of statistical models and quantitative analysis. To aid objectivity, the interaction between researchers and subjects or participants is kept to a minimum.

Having read widely on this subject and reflected on the theory, comparing different kinds of methodology in relation to the research problem for this study, I concluded that it clearly falls within a qualitative framework. This type of research is defined by Stake (2010: 15) as ‘interpretive’, ‘experiential’, ‘situational’, ‘personalistic’. Table 1 presents these characteristics of qualitative research in further detail – characteristics that could be considered valuable for this study.

Table 1: Characteristics of qualitative research

Interpretative	Experiential	Situational	Personal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple meanings • Respect intuition • Researcher–subject interaction • ‘It keys on the meanings of human as seen from different views’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empirical • Fieldwork-orientated • Emphasis on observations • Naturalistic • Reality is a human construction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orientated towards objects and activities • Each place and time is unique and this works against generalisations • Holistic • No direct comparison • Emphasis on detail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empathic regarding individuals’ perceptions • Seeks people’s points of view • ‘Often issues are emic (emerging from the people) more than etic (brought about by researchers)’ • Ethical • Researchers main research instruments

Source: Stake (2010: 15–16)

3.1.2 Qualitative interpretative research – a choice and a challenge

Stake (2010) points out that qualitative research is sometimes defined as interpretative research – that is, of a kind relying heavily on researchers’ interpretations of what they see and hear and those they study.

An important tenet of interpretativist views is that it is in the nature of people to interpret their surrounding environment and phenomena happening within it. Based on this,

researchers have concern for individuals and endeavour to understand ‘the subjective world’ (Cohen et al., 2007: 21) of their experience. In pursuit of this, researchers ‘experiment with the boundaries of interpretation’, associate research with social change and delve into characteristics such as race, ethnicity, age and culture. They also seek to establish an understanding of the relationship of the ‘researcher to the research’ (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994: ix).

The ontology of interpretativist research is relativism. Researchers maintain that ‘the complex world of lived experience’ (Schwandt, 1994: 118) can be understood if it is seen from the points of view of people who live it. Interpretativists not only begin with an attempt to understand people’s interpretations of the world and phenomena but also look for the meanings and motives behind their actions (Robson, 2002; Cohen et al., 2007). That is because interpretativists accept it is possible for multiple social realities and knowledge(s) to coexist (Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Denzin and Lincoln, 2003).

Interpretative research focuses on methods that allow for exploration, ‘finding the meanings of personally transformative experience’ (Stake, 2010: 38). It is guided by the principle that theory does not *precede* research but follows it and is constructed from situations that are investigated, interactions between researchers and participants, as well as observations (Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Schwandt, 1994; Scott and Usher, 1996; Cohen et al., 2007). Such researchers are interested in ‘detailed, rich, and thick (empathic) description, written directly and somewhat informally’ (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004: 14). Moreover, Schwandt (1994: 119) describes an interpretativist’s role in research as follows:

interpretivists wrestle with maintaining the opposition of subjectivity and objectivity, engagement and objectification. ... They struggle

with drawing a line between the object of investigation and the investigator.

In relation to the research problem motivating this study, using a qualitative interpretative research design would mean that the accounts and practices of the teachers, associated professionals and other school staff in the two subject schools could be better understood and interpreted than if other methods were used. Such a design allows researchers to become part of the research settings and make interpretations grounded in a good understanding of the surrounding conditions, the 'context and situation of the study' (Stake, 2010: 51). In other words, the researchers become empathetic parts of the context of the study, since the context is important to the story that is to be reported. The challenge lies in finding the potential participants, bridging the distance and potential sense of threat created by the presence of researchers and establishing the grounds for personal contact and conversation.

The hope is that, by deploying different methods, researchers can gather richer, more descriptive, and in-depth data and add 'rigor, breadth and depth' to their studies (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994:2)

Considering the qualitative nature of studies adopting an interpretative approach to knowledge, potential weaknesses could not be overruled throughout the different stages of research process. This is because qualitative research can be 'personalistic' and 'subjective' (Stake, 2010: 29). Researchers seek to make sense of what they are researching within an interpretative framework. In Scott and Usher's (1996: 18) words, both researchers and the research object 'have the same characteristic of being interpreters or sense-seekers' and, therefore, knowledge is 'perspective-bound' and interwoven with the researchers' involvement in the research project. This raises the question, how can researchers be

objective about the meanings constructed in the research process and what steps can be taken to establish objectivity?

This is the point at which interpretativists' approaches have received criticism as their argument is that knowledge is neither construed nor inferred from controlled experiences, as it is in positivists' approaches, so it cannot be regarded as legitimate. Stake (2010: 29) expresses the view that subjectivity need not be seen as a weakness but, rather, an 'essential element of understanding human activity' and interpretativist researchers, in fact, show a real concern for the validation of their data, employing multiple methods to address this complicated and multifaceted issue.

3.2 Research design and practical issues

3.2.1 Design rationale

Although the decision made regarding methodology was informed by the research problem and other emerging questions, the prospective audiences for this research as well as theoretical assumptions about the nature of this project, these were not the only influential factors in terms of the methodological choices made.

The review of studies and reports regarding Cypriot education and, in particular, Loizidou et al.'s (2007) study evaluating ZEP schools played an important role in my decision-making. As noted previously, very little has been written on this subject and hardly anything about the education of pupils with BESD. Loizidou et al.'s (2007) study is the only officially published evaluative research. Although, overall, encouraging outcomes have been obtained, Loizidou et al. recommend that future studies place an emphasis on studying the

micro-level of education, assessing the progress that has been made and exploring teaching practices.

Loizidou et al. (2007) do go beyond merely reporting findings, but, despite their pragmatic approach and their claim that the mixed methods they used aided the validation of their findings and resulted in greater confidence in their conclusions and recommendations, there was extensive appraisal of the responses of their participants. Among the instruments they employed for data collection were 25 semi-structured interviews with headteachers, ZEP coordinators, supporters, members of ZEP networks, school inspectors and EPs, but none with teachers. Teachers' views were, instead, collected by means of questionnaires.

It seems, then, that the researchers were not interested in including the experiences of teachers, but only examining their views collectively and quantitatively. This and the otherwise minimal empirical evidence there is on working with primary school pupils with BESD in the Cypriot literature (Angelides, 2000; Tryfonos, 2006) has informed the research approach chosen for this study. Thus, this study stresses the importance of collecting the personal experiences and perceptions of teachers who work directly with pupils with BESD in ZEP schools gained from visiting the classrooms and collecting data from everyday teaching situations.

3.2.2 A case study approach?

The research problem, assumptions with regard to the nature of this research and my teaching experiences all influenced the decisions made regarding which methodology to use. This then informed the next level of decision-making, which was to select the case study as an appropriate approach.

My teaching experience and having previously carried out a case study of three pupils with BESD (Tryfonos, 2006) indicated that the case study approach would be the right one as the teachers could share their experiences. Their accounts, from the front line rather than being in any way remote from reality, could then have a positive impact, improving teaching practice for children with BESD, especially in the schools involved in the study. Also, my experience led to me reasoning that such an approach would penetrate to the heart of the situation in a way that has not been achieved by previous research using other approaches (Cohen et al., 2007). It has the potential, too, to make the most effective use of the resources available, within the conditions and boundaries surrounding the data-collection process, and enable an holistic and robust analysis of the present practice in the chosen schools. That is because the emphasis is on specific and narrow fields and this allows a thorough examination of a subject/object to be made and rich descriptions of cases to emerge (Yin, 2003; Cohen et al., 2007; Bryman, 2008; Thomas, 2009). A case study approach empowers a researcher to portray the reality of a specific and dynamic context at a particular time by employing different instruments for data collection. As Thomas (2009:115) argues:

A case study involves in-depth research into one case or small set of cases. The case may be a child, a teacher, a class, a school, a social services department ... the list could go on. The aim is to gain a rich, detailed understanding of the case by examining aspects of it in detail.

Moreover, a case study, as stated by Cohen et al. (2007: 253), provides a unique example of real people in real-world situations and, thus, encourages us to understand the ideas, experiences and perceptions presented, as well as associate them with the context. In deciding on a case study approach for this research, it was hoped that significant features would be grasped that might otherwise be lost in a larger-scale research approach.

The characteristics of the case study approach discussed by Robson (2002), Yin (2003) and Cohen et al. (2009) added further impetus to choosing this approach over others. Robson and Yin argue that a case study is a legitimate approach involving focusing a comprehensive and multifaceted exploration on a particular case or set of cases studied in their natural, real-life settings. Robson characterises it as a descriptive, empirical approach concentrating on a particular case or cases, while Yin adds that it is a scientific approach and can provide logical sets of statements, thus challenging criticisms as to how scientific this kind of research approach is. Moreover, Yin (2003: 39) argues that the findings, like other social science approaches, can be subjected to construct validation, internal and external validation as well as replication and suggests a series of ‘tactics’ to address issues of validity, reliability and trustworthiness in each phase of such research. For example, different sources of evidence could be employed during the data-collection phase, to address construct validity, and logic models could be developed during the data analysis process to address issues of internal validity. In addition, processes applied to the use of individual research instruments during data collection could enhance the validity and reliability of the resulting data.

Even if a case study approach will involve rigorously and systematically collecting data and a focus on the subtlety and complexity of the chosen case, a number of authors note that additional limitations need to be considered at the planning stage (Robson, 2002; Yin, 2003; Bryman, 2008). For instance, it can be that results are not generalisable or open to cross-checking as case studies can be ‘selective, biased, personal and subjective’ (Cohen et al., 2007: 256). In addition, in cases where observation is the chosen tool for the collection of data, the results can be prone to limitations arising from observer or interviewer bias.

Having established why a case study approach would be the most appropriate for this research, it was then time to decide whether a single or a multiple case study would be more relevant. It was decided to carry out a case study of two schools as using a multiple case study approach would offer distinct advantages over a single one. For instance, evidence from a multiple case study is regarded as more compelling. A disadvantage is that it may require wide-ranging resources and more time to complete than would a single case study (Yin, 2003).

3.2.3. Sample issues at the ‘broader level’: the cases

Two decisions had to be made with regard to selection of sample for this study. The first, concerned the ‘broader-level’ (Yin, 2011: 85) sample – that is, the case to be studied – and the second, the ‘narrower-level’ sample – the individual participants.

Concerning the first, this study is limited to primary ZEP schools for two reasons. First, as a primary school teacher, I have worked in different primary schools, one of which is now a ZEP school, so I had background knowledge of the school’s culture and issues related to the practices used and support given to pupils with SENs at this level. Further, as mentioned above, I had previously undertaken a case study (Tryfonos, 2006) looking at three particularly serious cases of pupils with BESD that had been reported to the LEA and EDP. This experience proved valuable during the study itself and particularly when analysing the findings as it was possible to link many of the issues and ideas that arose during data collection and create a comprehensive and detailed picture of the subject of the study.

Second, by restricting this study’s field of investigation to primary schools, the analysis of the results and conclusions, rather than being perhaps unhelpfully general, could be more

detailed, focusing on specific and unique features of these schools, such as the nature of the schools' populations, organisation and the practices and processes the teachers had developed to provide support to those pupils with BESD.

Having decided that the study would focus on primary ZEP schools, then, the district and case or cases to be studied needed to be selected. There were four districts in Cyprus, at the time, which had schools included in the ZEP schools programme (see Figure 4, districts A, B, C, and D). Two factors were taken into account for the selection of the district and the schools and these were: (a) familiarity with the area, and (b) characteristics of the population.

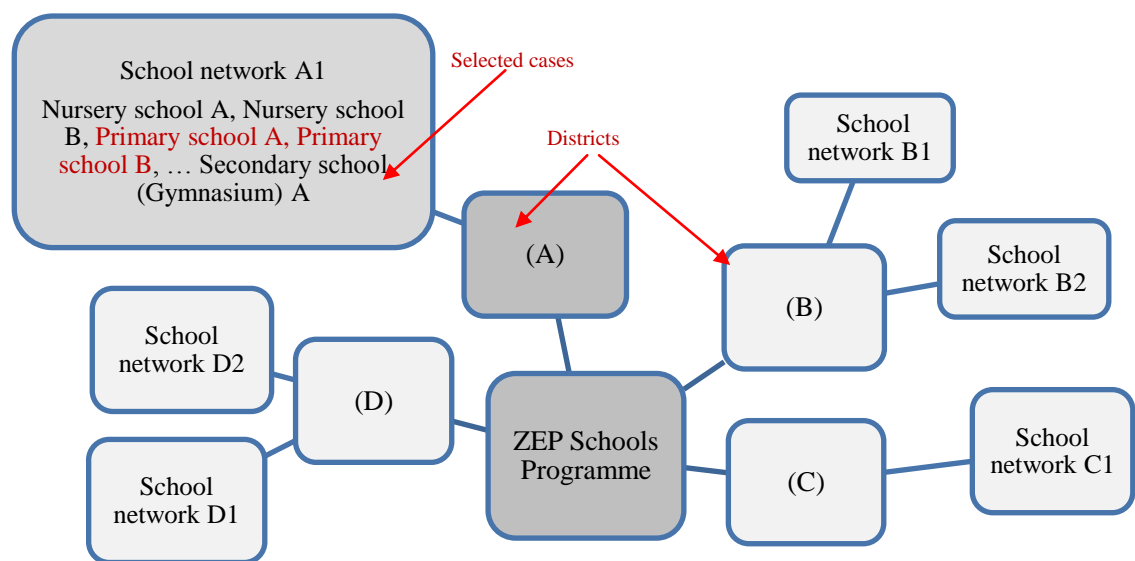


Figure 4: The selected cases

District A was selected and two primary schools which were located in the district were both good candidates for the study. This is because the two schools shared common characteristics the 'large proportions of drop outs', 'incidents of violence' and a number of cases of pupils with 'delinquent behaviour' –conditions also considered for being included

in the ZEP schools programme (Spinthourakis et al., 2008:9). The schools also shared same educational objectives, programmes since both being ZEP schools.

Following decisions concerning the selection of district, cases, the schools, the next important step was to gain access. It might be assumed that when asked to taking part in research, teachers would probably have no objection considering that part of the effort is aimed to improve teaching and learning. Nevertheless this was not the case. The view expressed by Cohen et al., (2007: 54) that access to the field should not be expected as ‘a matter of right’ proved right –as ‘trust’ was a key issue needed to be addressed before being granted access to conduct the research in the schools. Thus, access to the schools also depended on the following two conditions:

- the headteachers expressed an interest in participating in this research
- the headteachers consented to the proposed research plan.

Therefore in gaining access to the location of fieldwork, several steps had to be taken. These were the same for both schools. First a letter was sent to relevant department in the MOEC requesting for permission to conduct the study (Appendix 1) as well as to the schools which could potentially take part. Second both Schools A and B were contacted in order to identify whether there was interest for participation. Third soon after permission was given by the MOEC schools were contacted again and issues in relation to the research process itself (i.e. methods, participants, code of conduct and ethical principles guiding this study), had to be explained in order to gain the trust of the headteachers of the schools and then of potential participants.

Lankshear and Knobel (2004:184) identify issues such as ‘respect for the privacy, dignity and integrity’ as the key ones that must be discussed when negotiating access to field, especially as, in any research project, these consist participants’ main concerns. For this reason all the necessary documents (letter from the MOEC confirming permission for the study to be conducted, a letter to the schools requesting permission for gaining access, a sample of the interview guide, consent forms and working plan) were sent to the headteacher following the telephone conversation. Then similar steps were taken also for School B.

3.2.4 Sample issues at the ‘narrower level’: the participants

Having made decisions regarding the sample at the ‘broader level’, now it was necessary to be defined at the ‘narrower level’ – that is, a sample needed to be chosen that would yield robust, and credible knowledge for the study.

Yin (2010: 92) suggests that, for the ‘narrower-level’ samples, researchers, rather than seeking ‘any formulaic guidance’ for selecting them, need to think about the complexity of the subject matter and the depth of the data collected. Durkheim and Van der Riet (1999) explain that sampling in qualitative interpretative studies is less technical than in positivistic studies, however, as these authors highlight it is important that the research thoroughly explains the sampling process as well as any associated issues prior to conducting the study. Researchers, Durkheim and Van der Riet (1999) continue, need to explain in detail:

- how the sample has been selected – randomly, purposefully or by means of any other method – and why the chosen method for sampling is appropriate to the study
- the characteristics of the required sample and reasons

- the sample size and how this will be determined.

Cohen et al., (2007) outline various different sampling methods, probability and non-probability ones, and conclude that the chosen sampling strategy, such as any other choice made for the purposes of the study, should not be made randomly. Rather, as Cohen et al., (2007: 117) conclude, suitability and accessibility must govern researcher's decisions as well as factors such as the:

- purpose and objectives of the research;
- time;
- constraints on the research;
- the research methodology;
- data collection methods.

The nature of this study, as well as its purpose suggests a sample representative to the chosen cases –the schools. As this study is a case study and two schools were selected, as part of the 'broader level' sample, the ideal would be all the staff working in the schools to participate. However due to the objectives of this study it was considered important that all the staff, in the two schools, working with pupils with BESD would be invited. Pupils could not be interviewed as I did not have permission from the MOEC to interview them. Table 2, shows the teaching and non teaching staff, as well as key professionals who are shared between the schools. Any of these people working with those pupils identified as presenting with BESD were considered potential participants. According to this table, there are 15 people working either as teaching or as non-teaching staff in School A, 20 in School B and 3 who are shared between the two schools:

Table 2: Teaching and non-teaching staff

Professional Role	School A	School B
Headteachers	1	2
Deputy Headteachers	2	2
Teachers (including ZEP schools coordinator)	7	13
EP	1	
Speech Therapist	1	
SWS officer	1	
SEN teacher (SEN Unit)	1	1
SEN TA (synodos)	1	2
Turkish -speaking Assistants Working with Roma pupils	2	0
Interpreter	1	0
Total Staff	15	20

The sample was chosen, purposefully, based on the following three criteria to allow conclusions to be drawn about the findings of this study as well as its credibility:

- professional role;
- the data-collection tool ;
- willingness to participate.

Professional role’ meant members of staff, or associated professionals (Table 2) in the subject schools who provide learning or other support to the pupils. The following descriptions clarify further who this includes:

- ‘Associated professionals’ are those who work closely with the schools, such as EPs appointed to work in the schools, SWS officers, SEN teachers, TAs, speech therapists, interpreters.

- Those who ‘work closely with the pupils’ would include class teachers or ‘associated professionals’
- Associated ‘professionals working closely with the school’ during the identification, assessment and decision for provision procedure, as well as with any pupil in particular.

Finally the ‘data-collection tool’ and ‘willingness for participation’ criteria. It was considered essential to have at least one set of observation sessions and interviews for each year group for each one of the two schools (see Chapter 1, Figure 2-structure of primary education). The main aim was to obtain in-depth data from those who had shown an interest in participating in the research (Cohen et al., 2007). Participating in the observations as well the interviews was the optimum situation as then two aspects of the same reality in the school could be captured – that is how teachers go about realising good practice when working with pupils with BESD and their perceptions of good practice.

Although the criteria for selecting the sample were established in advance, it was not possible to be definite about the final number of participants (Robson, 2002). From the initial distribution of consent forms in School A and then School B, a potential complexity concerning the participants’ responses to participating in the research was foreshadowed. While the majority of the potential participants chose to be both interviewed and observed, at later stages they withdrew their interest in one or the other (see Chapter 4, 4.1).

3.2.4.1 Pupils as part of the observation field

Pupils were considered as part of the ‘narrower-level sample’ (Yin , 2011: 117) , as being part of the observation field –classroom observations. One pupil in each class, one who was pointed out as pupil presenting with BESD was included in the observations.

The headteacher and class teachers helped in pointing out certain pupils who had presented with the following traits:

- thought to present BESD and steps have been taken by the school to establish assessment of his/her needs
- presenting with behaviour-related difficulties and has received official identification

For each pupil pointed out a description of the difficulties and characteristics presented was provided. Additional information for these pupils was given by the SEN teacher and the EP.

3.2.5. Representativeness of sample

One of the challenges a case study research has to address is representation of the cases that are examined to the wider population (Yin, 2003, 2010; Cohen et al., 2007). Therefore apart from setting the criteria for the selection of the sample both for the ‘broader- level’ and then for the ‘narrower-level’ it was essential to think in terms of representation. As a case study itself represents ‘a unique case’ (Yin, 2003; Yin, 2010; 18), a unique example in its field worthy to be studied, it can be a challenged, since findings often do not represent the wider population. Case study researchers do not intend to provide generalisations (Yin, 2003), rather their aim is to present those features and characteristics that make the case unique and important to be studied as well as to inform, in the case of education, practices with the aim of improvement.

Similarly it can be claimed that the schools examined in this study do not represent the wider number of Cypriot primary ZEP schools. Nevertheless they represent a unique case, as at the time of study there were 10 Cypriot primary ZEP schools spread in four different

districts (see Figure 4). The schools involved in this study, represent the primary schools of a particular district where there are only two such schools. However this study not only represents a specific situation, but findings are likely to inform other situations or cases (Yin, 2010). Bearing this in mind, and in order to claim representativeness of the cases to the wider population, larger number of schools would be needed which was neither the intention of the researcher nor the purpose of this study.

3.2.6. Selectiveness of evidence

Yin (2003: 164) argues that an exemplary case study is the one that:

Judiciously and effectively presents the most relevant evidence, so the reader can reach an independent judgement regarding the merits of analysis.

Notwithstanding the importance of such selectiveness when analysing and reporting the findings, this can be considered a challenge for the researcher and a point to receive criticism –as ‘it takes a lot of discipline’ (Yin, 2003: 164) to show to the potential readers that the cases were treated fairly and conclusions drawn are valid. However, as Yin (2003) further explains, selectiveness does not necessarily mean that the researcher cited the evidence in a biased way –for instance presenting the evidence that supports the researcher’s conclusion.

In this study, a comprehensive presentation of the findings was intended; however selectiveness to a certain degree could not be avoided. This is because inevitably the data collection process resulted in data which was not relevant to the subject of study and therefore its reporting would not add to the drawing of conclusions. Moreover it was the intention of the researcher to treat the analysis and reporting of findings from both schools fairly.

3.2.7 Ethical considerations

Any research undertaken must be clear not only in terms of its objectives, methodology and tools, but also be conducted in accordance with ethical guidelines and a code of conduct (Patton, 2002; Robson, 2002; BERA, 2004; Cohen et al., 2007).

The revised ethical guidelines for educational research issued by the British Educational Research Association (BERA) state that any such research should be conducted within an 'ethic of respect for the person; the knowledge; the democratic values; the quality of educational research and academic freedom' (BERA, 2004: 5). Furthermore, as participants can be either 'active or passive subjects' of research (BERA, 2004:5), researchers must not only treat them with respect personally but also take the necessary steps to ensure that all the research processes are carried out with respect to the individuals involved.

The nature of this study and the fieldwork meant that certain decisions and commitments, towards participants, needed to be made to ensure ethical practice was maintained in all dealings with all the participants. Specifically, the ethical concerns related to the participation of adults and pupils where the latter are part of the field of the study but not its subject. To ensure that these concerns were overcome, as mentioned above, I acted according to an 'ethic of respect' (BERA, 2004: 5) and followed an accepted 'code of conduct'. Steps were taken to ensure that all participants understood the research process in which they would take part. That included a briefing session explaining to them the objectives of the research, what processes would be followed for the collection of data (see Consent form, Appendix 5), the methods that would be used to analyse and present the findings and their role throughout the research process. In addition, I made clear to the participants how this research would be reported and published. Most importantly

participants were assured of the processes that would be used to protect their entitlement to the rights of privacy and confidentiality as well as their right to withdraw for ‘any or no reason’ from the research. (BERA, 2004: 6).

Thus, throughout the study and in the analysis and presentation of the resulting data, steps were taken to ensure these principles. All accounts and findings were coded and the names of people were disguised sensitively, so that their privacy would be protected and no harm would come from their participation. Also a consent form was given to all prospective participants and a letter was sent to the parents of the schools (Appendix 5 and Appendix 3). This form, according to the guidelines of BERA (2004), was the condition in which participants understood and agreed to their participation in the research without any pressure. The title, purpose and the process followed for the data collection, as well as those showing acts to protect participants’ rights, were disclosed to participants through the *consent form*. Also participants could state, in the form, their participation to either of the two methods of data collection or both. In addition, and in relation to participation in interviews, participants were told that a recording device would be used and the recordings would only be listened by the researcher and her two supervisors.

Pupils as participants in this study

As mentioned earlier, pupils were also part of the context of this study and therefore it was my responsibility to ensure that all principles of the code of conduct applied to adults would be applied to pupil participants. It was important that pupils would understand the reason for the presence of the researcher in their classroom as well as to provide consent for participation in research.

According to BERA (2004: 7):

In the case of participants whose *age*, intellectual capability or *other vulnerable* circumstance may limit the extent to which they can be expected to understand or agree voluntarily to undertake their role, researchers must fully *explore alternative ways* in which they can be enabled to make authentic responses. In such circumstances the researcher *must also seek the collaboration and approval of those who act in guardianship or as 'responsible others'* (i.e. those who have the responsibility of the welfare and well-being of the participants). *(my emphasis added)*

Furthermore, for the following reasons permission was not granted to interview individual pupils primarily because the Ministry of Education had given permission to only interview and observe teachers and conduct classroom observations. Nevertheless the following reasons would have impeded any potential interview with pupils:

- age- under 10 years old, difficult to gain consent from children of this age;
- Difficulties to approach and communicate with parents;
- Language difficulties of the children and their parents;
- Difficulties to understand the purpose and methods of research;
- Respect of privacy and of identity of the pupil indicated as presenting with BESD (did not want to direct attention to one child)

Concerning obtaining consent from pupils the above reasons also led to the decision for not obtaining consents from them. Following a communication with the headteachers of the schools it was decided that all the parents would be informed about the research through letter sent to them from the school (see Appendix 3) and all pupils would be additionally informed during a school assembly about the research that would be carried out. Therefore as part of authorising the research, prior to the visit the school has informed the parents of

the visit. The parents were encouraged to contact the school if they had any objections or concerns; nevertheless no objections have been raised.

Concerning providing information to the pupils, an assembly took place the first day of my visit to each of the two schools, following the briefing that was given to the teachers of the school and children were given also the opportunity to ask questions concerning the research. Additionally approval was given by the headteachers for entering the classrooms.

3.3 Working plan

As the research involved two subject schools and two different data-collection tools, it was necessary for the headteachers to have detailed information concerning the timetable of my visits to their schools, the tasks scheduled to be undertaken during these visits, as well as the people who would be involved. For this reason, a plan concerning the visits was prepared, personalised for each school, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Working Plan

PILOT STUDY	06/02/2009		09/02/09	10/02/09	11/02/09	12/02/09		
	Initial observation (not actual pilot)	Preparation of the observation form for the pilot	Pilot observation (2)	Pilot observation form (2)	Pilot observation form (2)	FINAL PILOT Observation form		
				More amendments	Final Amendments	Interview Guide pilot		
Data collection: SCHOOL A	Time/Date	02/04/09	03/04/09	06/04/09	07/04/09	08/04/09	09/04/09	10/04/09
	07:40-08:15	Briefing & Assembly ⁽¹⁾	Observ.	Observ.	Observ.	Observ.	Observ.	Interview
	08:15-09:05	Training observation ⁽²⁾	Observ.	Observ.	Observ.	Observ.	Observ.	Interview
	09:05-09:25	Break Time						
	09:25-10:05	Observ.	Observ.	Observ.	Observ.	Observ.	Observ.	Interview
	10:05-10:45	Observ.	Observ.	Observ.	Observ.	Observ.	Observ.	Whole-School Assembly
	10:45-10:55	Break Time						
	10:55-11:35	Interview	Interview	Interview	Interview	Interview	Interview	Celebration for Easter Holidays
	11:35-12:15	Interview	Interview	Interview	Interview	Interview	Interview	
	12:15-12:25	Break Time						
	12:25-13:05	Interview	Interview	Interview	Interview	Interview	Interview	
Data collection: SCHOOL B	Time/ Date	26/10/09	27/10/09	28/10/09	29/10/09	30/10/09	02/11/09	03/11/09
	07:30-07:45	Briefing & Assembly (KA) ⁽³⁾	Observ.	Observ.	Observ.	Observ.	Observ.	Interview
	08:15-09:05	Briefing & Assembly (KB)	Observ.	Observ.	Observ.	Observ.	Observ.	Interview
	09:05-09:25	Break Time						
	09:25-10:05	Observ.	Observ.	Observ.	Observ.	Observ.	Observ.	Interview
	10:05-10:45	Observ.	Observ.	Observ.	Observ.	Observ.	Observ.	Interview
	10:45-10:55	Break Time						
	10:55-11:35	Interview ⁽⁴⁾	Interview	Interview	---	Interview	Interview	---
	11:35-12:15	Interview	Interview	Interview	---	Interview	Interview	---
	12:15-12:25	Break Time						
	12:25-13:05	Headteacher (KA)	Dep. Head (KA)	Headteacher (KB)	Dep. Head (KB)			
	Explanatory Notes:							
	(1) Briefing and Assembly –meeting the teachers and the pupils and talk about the study							
	(2) Training observations with the second observer							
	(3) Two briefings for teachers and two assemblies for children. School B had two headteachers –one for (KA):Grades A-Γ' (Year 1- Year 3'), and one for (KB)-Grades Δ-Στ.							
	(4) Interviews and observations depended on the individual daily programme of the participant.							

3.4 The data-collection tools

Two main data collection tools were used in this study – interviews and observations. In addition, informal conversations with headteachers enabled essential information about the schools to be gathered.

3.4.1 Interviews

A number of authors (Powney and Watts, 1987; Patton, 2002; Robson, 2002; Cohen et al., 2007; Bryman, 2008) emphasise the purposes and advantages of qualitative interviewing and that interviews allow researchers to see other people's points of view. Patton (2002: 341) notes that the starting point for an interview should be the assumption that the 'perspective of others is meaningful, knowable and able to be made explicit' and, therefore, we interview 'to learn what is in and on someone else's mind'. Finding out why people act in a certain way is a matter of asking and not observing as, behind actions, are the thoughts, intentions and feelings that people have. In terms of education, to explore why teachers choose one approach over another or teach in a certain way, it is necessary to interview them.

The purpose of the interviews carried out for this study was to allow participants to express their perceptions and points of view on different aspects of good practice in relation to pupils presenting with BESD. Participants were encouraged to reflect on their experiences and talk, when possible, with reference to the pupils with BESD in their class and outline the procedures and processes in place to address their pupils' difficulties effectively. Based on the 'framework of good practice' developed by Cole et al., (1998), the interview guide was designed to explore the views of participants on aspects of practices developed for

working with pupils presenting with BESD and explore what the participants perceive good practice to be. Also it was my objective to explore through their perceptions whether or not the elements of good practice have a bearing on achieving good practice in the subject schools.

Their responses were essential as lessons can be learned and conclusions can be drawn from how currently the two schools are working with pupils who are identified to present with BESD, and what are the shortcomings of the current practices. As well as capturing their views, which most likely derive from their experiences, it is essential to give them a *voice*. This not only creates a picture of the practices used in the two subject schools but also, as maintained in Chapter 1, raises questions for further research.

The interviews helped to gather data which answers aspects of the research question on:

- the understanding of the concept of BESD and of good practice
- the process that is followed, when a pupil is suspected with BESD, to assess the case and officially decide for learning support
- four broad areas of the framework of good practice
 - population: pupils and their families
 - people (teachers, headteachers, EP, SEN teacher, TAs, interpreter)
 - provision: school-level practices and classroom-level practices
 - place: the school and classroom milieu

3.4.1.1 Type of interview

There are various research tools that fall under the umbrella ‘interviews’ and they ‘are all useful for different situations’ (Stroh, 2000: 199), including focus group, group, one-to-one, informal, telephone (Stroh, 2000; Robson, 2002; Cohen et al., 2007; Bryman, 2008).

Interviewing participants on one-to-one basis allows for a certain degree of informality, so participants tend to feel comfortable and speak openly, going into detail (Powney and Watts, 1987; Cohen et al., 2007).

The choice of one-to-one interviews was, made for this and the following reasons:

- teachers’ and associated professionals’ spare time in school varies according to the timetable
- participants probably feel more comfortable expressing their views when interviewed one-to-one than in a group
- potential participants in research tend to turn down researchers’ requests for interviews more easily when the request is sent by post or made via the telephone than when they are made in person.

The pilot study (see section 3.7) which was conducted before undertaking the actual research, helped to establish the length of time it takes to complete an interview, as well as which type of interview was most effective. A number of other issues also needed to be taken into consideration:

- usefulness and weaknesses
- interview form and layout
- question type

- ethics and trustworthiness issues.

3.4.1.2. Level of Structure

As Gillham (2000: 59) argues, semi-structured interviews can be the ‘richest single source of data’ in a case study. It was anticipated that by employing semi-structured interviews for this study I would be enabled to collect information about ‘the more intangible aspects of school’s culture’ (Cohen et al.,2007:97), the feelings, views, concerns and problems arising from experience.

It was decided to opt for semi-structured interviews (as described by Robson, 2002, and Bryman, 2008), for two reasons.

First, having a totally unstructured interview increases the potential for biases, which would affect the validity of the data. Second, it increases the potential that unwanted and unreliable data will be produced, and, as Powney and Watts (1987) and Robson (2002) argue unstructured interviews can be a very difficult tool to use especially for an inexperienced researcher. Additionally the unstructured interview offers considerable flexibility requiring also more responsibility on behalf of the interviewers as the quality of the content, direction and length of interview depends largely on the participants’ responses (Powney and Watts, 1987).

Thus, the interview guide followed a specific structure and predetermined question agenda based on the research problem, but with flexibility built in. For example, in some cases, participants were asked questions for further clarification or to help them open up, but without guiding them towards certain answers. The emphasis, apart from generating data to shed light on the research problem, was on producing a natural and friendly conversation

that would release any pressure participants might feel under and enable them to thoroughly discuss their experiences.

3.4.1.3 Usefulness and weaknesses

Deciding the interview type was bound with considerations regarding the usefulness and effectiveness of a semi-structured interview to the research questions, taking into account the resultant weaknesses.

First, using semi-structured interviews to gather the perceptions of participants would be beneficial for developing the conclusions of this study because they provide a wealth of data on the subject of the study, allow the researcher to access the individual perspectives of interviewees and the process encourages interviewees to be discursive and provide ‘worthwhile data’ (Stroh, 2000: 214).

Second, interviews can be used as an instrument for collecting data and complementing findings collected by means of other instruments – in this case, observations (Robson, 2002; Cohen et al., 2007; Stake, 2010). This was very important as, by using this instrument in conjunction with observation, it was hoped it would be possible to understand the teachers’ views about good practice more fully than if they were only interviewed. Having a picture concerning classroom reality would also help to compare findings and establish the validity of the participants’ responses (Robson, 2002).

Also the following weaknesses were taken into consideration:

- the process can sometimes be time-consuming – preparing the interviews, conducting them and then listening to the recordings and transcribing what has been said.

- The flexibility feature of semi-structured interviews is likely to be a contributing factor for omitting important topics or adding others into the conversations which are irrelevant to the subject of study (Cohen et al., 2007).
- Interviewer and interviewee biases may affect the claims of the researcher (Robson, 2002; Lankshear and Knobel, 2004; Cohen et al., 2007).

These weaknesses could not be avoided and the researcher had to be focused on the research objectives to eliminate their effect on the research findings and thus the research claims. For instance potential participants, knowing that an interview can be a time-consuming process, appeared to be unwilling to devote their time to participate attributing their refusal to their heavy workload. This particular weakness was an important issue to address in this study. Some participants, in School A and in School B, initially consented to participation then withdrew due to that it would take between thirty to forty minutes for the interview to be completed. In this case the support of the headteachers of the schools and their encouragement towards participation, as well as the briefing sessions helped a lot in that school staff was more positive in the end.

The degree of flexibility offered by a semi-structured interview format presented to be a weakness of interviews in this study. Participants often got carried away turning the conversation to issues that concerned them and they had to be re-directed back to the subject of conversation. What helped a lot in reducing the impact of the flexibility of the interview guide on the interview process was the interview guide itself. Checking it constantly, during the interview, and bringing up the topic of the conversation into the discussion helped considerably in maintaining the focus of conversations and addressing all the questions. Also asking them a supplementary question ‘why’, and keeping the focus on the pupil they

identified as pupil with BESD (in the cases where this was possible) enabled to collect justifications for their responses, examples from their everyday practice, feelings and their perceptions.

Concerning interviewer and interviewee biases, as Powney and Watts (1987), Robson (2002) and Cohen et al., (2007) explain, this could result in a lack of accuracy in a participant's responses stemming from them being suspicious of the interviewer and, thus, responding to the questions in a guarded way. Robson (2002: 172) argues that interviewee biases may range from 'obstructiveness, and withholding information' to the 'good bunny syndrome' (that is, participants providing information that they think the researchers want to hear).

There is also the issue of interviewers biasing the process based on their assumptions or preconceptions (Robson, 2002). In order to prevent this weakness from becoming a limitation to this study, I always tried to asked the participants to provide examples from their everyday activities and to ask them *why* as well as to keep the focus on the interview guide. Being a teacher for many years and familiar with practices at school, but away from Cypriot primary schools for some time resulted at one hand in being familiar with the field of study and the teaching practices and at another created a gap concerning developments about behaviour difficulties at schools. Therefore I was genuinely interested in finding out what is really the reality of practice at the subject schools. The questions posed were focused upon illuminating this reality and participants were left to do most of the talking.

3.4.1.4 The length of the interview sessions

The interview sessions were scheduled to each last for 40 minutes. There were two reasons for this.

- Cypriot teachers have 40 minutes outside of their time in the classroom (apart from breaktimes) available during the school day in which to organise their work, meet parents and so on. So, the teachers could only be interviewed without interruptions during these 40 minutes or break times.
- ‘Anything under half an hour is unlikely to be valuable’ and anything over an hour could have had the effect of reducing the number of teachers willing to participate (Robson, 2002: 272).

As there were potential complications with conducting the interviews during breaktimes or outside school hours, it was anticipated that the best option would be to schedule them for the teachers’ 40 minutes of free time. The willingness of prospective participants to take part was not as great as envisaged, so keeping the interview session to 40 minutes, it was hoped, would ensure the participation of as many teachers as possible.

3.4.1.5. The layout of interview guide

In line with Robson (2002) and Cohen et al. (2007), the interviews were designed to present the questions in a certain sequence.

The interview guide was formed of the following parts.

- **A: general information** This included general, standardised questions, with the exact wording and sequence used pertaining to the role played by the participants in the schools. For instance, participants were asked about their position in the school, how many years they had been teaching and how many years they had been at the school, as well as their experience and training in working with pupils who present with BESD.
- **B: elements of good practice and support provided** Following Part A, the aim of Part B was to generate information about the schools and discover the participants' understandings of the term BESD and good practice. This part of the interview was about the support options available as a result of the policies in place for identifying pupils with BESD, as well as the practices used in the schools. Given the general elusiveness of information in MOEC guidance with regard to pupils presenting with BESD (MOEC, 1992, 1999), the experiences of the participants and their views, it was hoped, would yield useful information about how different elements of 'good practice' are perceived. The guidance on good practice for pupils with BESD suggests that early identification can be particularly effective (DfES, 1997, 2001). It was suspected, from reviewing MOEC policies (1992, 1999, 2001, 2008), that many pupils with BESD attend mainstream primary schools, but their difficulties are not officially identified and addressed. Therefore, in this part of the interview, it was hoped that information would be generated about the process for assessing the needs of those pupils presenting with BESD and then they would detail their views on this. Indeed, when the interview guide was piloted, it yielded rich information on this issue.
- **C: practices at school level and the people involved** Much of the interview discussion generated by these questions concerned elements of good practice at this level. The

objective was to decipher elements of good practice and delve deeper into the participants' experiences and perceptions to investigate how the practitioners in these two schools go about realising good practice and what their perceptions and feelings about it are. Rather than focusing exclusively on discussing the processes involved in establishing appropriate learning support for pupils with BESD, the objective at this point was to build a full picture of the schools and their practices, then discuss the experiences of the participants, their feelings about this and, thus, their perceptions. The interviews at this point involved a discussion about initiatives taken at school level to address the needs of pupils with BESD and involve, motivate and encourage them. There was also a discussion about the network of professionals from different disciplines that had been developed at school level. The aim of this was to identify the nature of the collaborative work taking place at the two schools with these professionals. Moreover, in this section of the interviews, I hoped to identify any initiatives, projects or activities put into action in the two schools addressing the needs of pupils with BESD, to explore further how teachers perceive good practice and gather their views concerning the improvements being made to the existing practice. Additionally given that the plan was for the teachers to be interviewed after an observation with them was conducted, this section aimed to elucidated issues observed and gather information about choices that teachers might make during lessons.

- **D: classroom-level practices for teachers** This part applied only to teachers and, unlike parts A, B and C, its purpose was to decipher teachers' perspectives on their teaching practice and, particularly, their experiences of teaching pupils presenting with behaviour-related difficulties. It was hoped that, in this section of the interview, teachers would discuss their classroom practices in more detail, explain issues relating to

working with pupils with BESD, any support they receive in and outside the classroom and, overall, their understanding of how the ZEP programme is making a difference to these pupils. Given their hands-on experience, it was anticipated that the teachers would be the most appropriate people to express their views on what works with pupils with BESD and what could be improved.

3.4.1.6 Question type

In semi-structured interviews, the types of questions asked and their content are predetermined, but the order and wording can be changed as needed according to interviewers' perceptions as the interviews progress (Robson, 2002). Equally, some questions can be omitted for some interviewees if interviewers feel that they are inappropriate or else additional questions can be integrated, if, for example, clarification is needed or requested by the interviewees in order to understand a question (Robson, 2002).

The semi-structured format was adopted for this study as it was noted when piloting the interview guide that it was not possible to be certain about the extent of the participants' openness, truthfulness or understanding. By having a set of questions, but exercising a degree of flexibility in the wording and sequencing as required during the course of the interviews, as suggested by Cohen et al (2009), the researcher could make decisions according to how the conversation developed.

It was decided to use open-ended questions for this study, however, as this is the best way to find out what participants' perceptions are, discuss them in more detail and, thus, enrich their responses with information relating to their understanding, feelings and attitudes.

3.4.2 Observation

The second data-collection tool chosen for this study was that of observation. The key focus is on how teachers perceive good practice when working with pupils with BESD and, having chosen to apply a case study approach; it was logical and sensible to also observe how the teachers worked in the classroom. It was anticipated the benefits of this would be that:

- the data collected would not only be the result of employing a single instrument, introducing an element of rigour to the research.
- it would provide a more thorough examination of the cases than any other research instrument and complement the data collected in the interviews
- it could potentially address the influence of teacher's actions on pupil's behaviour.

Furthermore, as Yin (2003:15) argues case study is an 'empirical enquiry' which investigates phenomena in their 'real life context' – that is, it involves the potential for different methods to be employed to encapsulate the reality of the case under investigation. Carrying out observations would enable the classroom and, thus, the lesson reality to be highlighted and the teachers' responses in the interviews to be cross-checked with what they actually did during lessons.

Another factor that influenced the decision to carry out observations was the outcome of the first evaluative study on ZEP schools that was conducted in Cyprus in 2007. Loizidou et al. (2007) employed research instruments such as questionnaires for the collection of demographic data from the schools involved in the study, questionnaires about the pupils

and their progress and behaviour for the 2003-2006, and semi-structured interviews with different stakeholders (headteachers, ZEP coordinators, school inspectors, EPs and so on). The researchers did not interview or observe teachers who work in these schools. Loizidou et al.'s concluding remarks and the suggestions they made for further study examining the work of ZEP schools and the social and/or educational achievements of their pupils, however, highlight the importance of an alternative perspective on this issue being provided by future research. This could potentially be supplied by observational data.

Having had this thought and reviewed the literature, noting the argument made by several authors regarding the importance of the school and classroom environment, teachers' qualities, the networks built between the professionals, school, teachers and families, as well as the delivery of the curriculum, it was concluded that designing and developing an observational tool for collecting data was vital to achieving the key objectives of this study. This would increase the possibility of capturing information that would otherwise be missed in the interview process and so on – the two sources of data together building a more complete picture than if just one method was used.

The observation process did indeed enable detailed information to be generated, including:

- how teachers worked with pupils with BESD (actions employed during lessons)
- the general environment in the classroom and setting arrangements
- collaboration with other staff in the school if any
- an overall picture of the interactions between teachers and pupils during lessons.

Cohen et al (2007) explain that the observation method enables observers to glean feedback by seeing the situation at a remove. In this way, observers are enabled to pay attention to the context, in this case, the classroom, and throw light on issues related to the research

problem. Thus, in this study, by adopting the role of a passive ‘marginal observer’ (Robson, 2002: 318) and paying attention to what teachers do as they are teaching, making detailed notes relating to classroom practices, as well as recording pupils’ progress or engagement with the lesson, an overall picture emerged of the lesson observed.

It is worth noting that efforts were made to observe those teachers who would participate in the interviews in order to complement the interview findings, check their responses for any inconsistencies and ask about issues which were seen to emerge during the teaching and learning process.

Despite the advantages of the observation method, such as its directness and the low-cost requirements in order to conduct an observation study, as well as it allowing researchers to examine the subjects of study in detail and in their real-life settings, it does also have certain limitations (Robson, 2002; Bryman, 2008; Cohen et al., 2007).

Various authors (Robson, 2002; Cockburn, 2005; Cohen et al., 2007) consider that designing an observation is neither easy nor free from difficulties or bias and particularly prone to observer biases. Cohen et al. (2007: 410) explain that what observers see is a function of how, what, where and when they look at the subject of study. A risk of this is that observers are likely to become distracted by something other than what they are supposed to be observing. Later, when it comes to drawing conclusions from the study, such distractions may raise problems concerning the validity of the data collected.

Another issue is that it can be considered intrusive by the people being observed (Muijs, 2008) and, thus, likely to be prone to participants’ biases. As Muijs (2008) writes, those

being observed can find the experience stressful and may become reluctant to consent to take part.

Regarding observer bias, one particular difficulty of major concern became apparent during the study: how to monitor for observer effects on participants and participants acting in a way that they believe will please the observer. As Muijs (2008: 53) notes:

teachers can try and teach in a way that they think observers want,
prepare more for lessons that are to be observed and so on ...

It was thus important to ensure that the observation data would be collected in such a way that the effect of biases would be diminished. To achieve this, my role as observer, the purpose of the study and the process that would be used were explained fully and clearly and time limits were set for the observations(during briefings sessions). This also helped to alleviate any sense of threat and intrusion felt, encouraged confidence in the observer and secured the teachers' participation.

This approach is supported by Bryman (2008) and Cohen et al. (2007), who agree that what is needed when monitoring for reactivity is for researchers to become sensitive to the length of observation session. On the one hand, spending too much time may lead to the development of relationships with those being observed and lessen their feelings of observers intruding, but this can influence the observers' judgement as to what to record and how to record it. On the other hand, if less time is spent, participants may make adjustments to the way they act because they know that they are being observed and are the focus of investigation.

For this reason, the teachers were observed in two lessons, when this was possible, either as one-off observation course of 80 minutes or two of 40 minutes, and thus the choice that had

to be made was between observing a 40-minute or 80-minute lesson. With 40 minutes, the researcher would have to go back to the same class and do the collection of data again. Most of the teachers were reluctant being observed twice at different times. They preferred the one-off observation course; thus a double observation session of totally 80 minutes proved to be the best solution, for the researcher, the teachers and pupils. This happened for two reasons: first, teachers and pupils would not have to be disturbed twice during lessons, and I would not have to keep asking teachers for their permission to go back; and second, the flow of the lesson would be more natural by remaining in the class longer than going back and doing a second observation.

Questions as to how to record, what to record, how much to record and how to know which records are valid and reliable and which are not were also born in mind as the observation schedule was designed. As observation is not ‘hypothesis tested’ but ‘hypothesis generated’ (Cohen et al., 2007: 397), I concluded that the observation recording should be dealt in consistency in order to ensure greater the degree of reliability the resulting data would have.

In this study, records were made during the observation sessions so that most of what was happening in the class would be noted down at the time of its occurrence. These notes were of two types:

- coded descriptions of actions taken by the teachers and pupils during lessons
- reflective notes – descriptions and of important aspects of a lesson or classroom environment.

A practical limitation of this method is that carrying out observations tends to be a time-consuming process (Robson, 2002). To ensure that they are done properly involves making a big commitment to the process and, importantly, drawing up an observation schedule to help reduce the possibility of time being wasted (Robson, 2002; Cohen et al., 2007). For this reason a recording system was decided which is described in the following section.

3.4.2.1 Recording system used for the observation sessions

A recording system was needed to ensure that there would be as complete a record of what happened in the classroom as possible, for, as Robson (2002: 323) notes:

even with the most unstructured observation it is crucial to have a system which allows you to capture information unambiguously and as faithfully as possible.

Thus, an observation form was developed (see Appendix 7) that enabled the observer to keep records about each lesson before and during the observation session. The teachers were asked in each instance to provide information about the population of the class, the lesson, the pupil with BESD and the teaching plan. Moreover, as it was among the objectives of the research design for interview findings and observations to complement each other, exploring teachers' actions and cross-checking what had been said in interviews with actual practice, the form was designed to include reflective notes in the form of descriptions of incidents throughout the session.

The observation form consisted of two parts

Part A: information about the lesson

Here, information was recorded regarding the lesson prior to it beginning, such as information about the pupil with BESD and his/her behavioural characteristics, the lesson plan, seating arrangements, equipment, and resources used for the lesson by the teacher.

Part B: record of the observation session

Getting this right was not straightforward – this part needed to be reviewed and amended a lot before being finalised. The literature review and the pilot study that was conducted provided the time, context and the theoretical background that were needed to design and then practise using the form to record teachers' and pupils' actions. Gaining some experience in doing so enabled the observation form to be completed in a consistent way.

This part of the observation form was also divided into two sections, due to the nature of what needed to be recorded during the observation sessions.

Section A was structured with the objective of collecting information in a systematic way to enable comparisons to be made with the data from the other interviews as well as that recorded by the second observer (see section 3.4.2.2). It was designed to record what was happening in the classroom using 'partial time interval recording' (Cohen et al., 2007: 402). Following the pilot study, this method of recording behaviour was considered the most appropriate way to record the teachers' actions and the pupils' behaviour during the lessons.

To this end a table was created in Section A showing the total observation time divided into 20 columns, each of which represented a 4-minute time interval, with 10 columns for the first observation session and 10 columns for the second (Appendix 7). Behaviour or actions

were then recorded in the column for the time interval when they occurred (Wilkinson, cited in Cohen et al., 2007: 402). This method enabled the researcher to observe what the teachers did in relation to the pupils with BESD and record the teachers' actions first and then the pupils' behaviour.

Deciding on the recording method was one of two challenges that had to be addressed in the design of Section A. The second was how to note the teachers' actions and the behaviour demonstrated by the pupils in response. The review of the literature helped a lot in deciding how to define first the actions of teachers and then the behaviour of pupils.

Concerning teacher's actions, an analysis conducted by Angelides (2000) of 'critical incidences' offers a perspective on understanding behaviour and responding to it. According to Angelides, 'critical incidences' are events taking place at school that influence teachers and pupils considerably. It can be claimed, given Angelides' analysis of such incidences, which took place in Cypriot primary school, that addressing behavioural difficulties has much to do with teachers' attitudes towards pupils who present with behaviour difficulties, how teachers deal with behaviour they consider problematic, their approaches and how pupils respond to anything that is taking place in the classroom. Angelides (2000: 65) observed and interviewed teachers and pupils involved in the critical incidences in order to decipher their perspectives and highlighted that teachers:

- appeared to ignore pupils with behavioural difficulties
- seemed to isolate them in order to diminish the effects of their behaviour in the classroom
- tended not to devote extra time to these pupils
- and how they behaved towards these pupils seemed to have an impact on their attitudes towards the teachers.

Angelides (2000) described an approach used by a teacher to deal with behaviour – that of sanctions when a pupil misbehaved during a lesson. The teacher reminded the pupils who were misbehaving that they would not have a PE lesson as a result. In another incident reported by Angelides (2000), a pupil – a fifth-grade girl – was ignored during a lesson, was isolated from what was happening and given no opportunity to participate.

Also in a case study of three pupils (three boys) with behavioural difficulties (Tryfonos, 2006) conducted in a Cypriot primary school, teachers reported that providing behaviour incentives were effective when working with pupils with BESD. Teachers in this study considered providing positive reinforcement, praise, motivation and working with the pupils on one-to-one basis, as effective actions when working with pupils with such difficulties. In addition, participants stated that talking to the pupils, providing individual support and ignoring behaviour, can help considerably in dealing with difficult behaviour and working with these pupils.

Having considered the findings of these studies, the following teachers' actions were selected to be included on the observation form. The first two concerned mainly teachers delivery of the lesson and then next three teachers actions related to approaches redirecting the pupil back to the lesson.

- **Explaining task** when teachers were explaining tasks.
- **Opening discussion** engaging in discussion with the whole class, presentation of work by pupils.
- **Providing individual support** working on a one-to-one basis with a pupil.
- **Behavioural approaches** using, for example, praise, positive comments, motivational incentives

- **Reminding about rules, code of good behaviour.**
- **Other** using any other approach that could not be classified, such as ignoring the pupil's behaviour, ignoring the pupil, not providing opportunities to contribute.

When '*other*' was recorded on the observation form, notes were taken to specify what approach was taken by the teacher.

Concerning pupils' behaviour, the recording system used in the observation was influenced by the information collected Tryfonos' (2006) case study which examined three cases of pupils presenting with BESD in one Cypriot primary school (Tryfonos, 2006) as well as by the study of Evans et al., (2003) and Harden et al., (2003). The behavioural difficulties of pupils in Tryfonos (2006) study were described as not engaging in classroom activities, disrupting other pupils or being withdrawn.

A systematic review of studies evaluating the support for pupils with BESD in mainstream primary school classrooms by Evans et al. (2003) and Harden et al. (2003: 26) employed the following operational definitions in order to analyse the studies identified in the field of BESD and the support that was provided to the pupils:

off-task behaviour, characterised by not engaging in the work set by the teacher, fiddling with pencils and other equipment, wandering round the classroom, etc.

disruptive behaviour, characterised by calling out in class, interfering with others' possessions, talking to others and disturbing their work

aggressive behaviour, arguing, fighting, name-calling, etc.

other, such as inappropriate attempts to engage with peers, refusal to engage with peers or adults.

The pupils with BESD demonstrated similar behaviour during the lessons observed for the pilot study, mentioned above – in some cases regardless of the teachers’ actions, but, in others, in response to the actions of their teachers. So, these were used as the basis for the system for recording their behaviour, as follows:

- **on task**, working on tasks set by the teacher
- **off task**, such as ignoring teacher’s instructions and not engaging in activities set by the teacher, refusing to work, not collaborating with peers when working on given tasks
- **disruptive**, disturbing other pupils while working, excessive talking or seeking attention frequently, either from the teacher or peers
- **emotional difficulties**, withdrawn
- **aggressive/violent** engaging in fighting during the lesson, using abusive language.

Additionally, pupils were seen giving excuses to leave the classroom two or three times during the lesson or wandering around in the classroom, ignoring their teacher’s requests for them to return to their seat or else working with a TA on tasks set by the TA. This behaviour could not be classified according to the above list, so was recorded as ‘other’.

The pilot study helped to refine these categories, simplify them and develop the final observation form where the researcher could record behaviour as being on task, off task, disruptive, aggressive or other.

Finally, in Section B of Part B of the observation form, the researcher could note anything to reflect on or things observed, said by the teacher and so on that it was important to keep a record of.

3.4.2.2 A second observer

Of ongoing concern was the extent to which the findings of this study would be consistent and reliable.

The observation method is prone to biases associated with the observers, such as them easily getting tired or distracted due to the monotonous, repetitive nature of recording what is being observed or things that have to be recorded happening simultaneously (Cohen et al., 2007; Bryman, 2008). Being the only observer recording the teachers' practice, there was a danger that this could be undertaken in a 'totally idiosyncratic' way (Robson, 2002: 340), reducing the reliability of the findings, so a second observer was sought.

Such a person was found. She was familiar with both qualitative research and primary education. Detailed information about the purpose of the research and the nature of the observation to be undertaken, including a careful explanation of how to complete the observation form, were provided and a training observation session conducted. The shorthand developed to note down behaviour and so on the form was also explained and tested out in the training session. The plan was for the second observer to complete observations in both Schools A and B, but, due to personal reasons on her part, she was only able to do so in School A. Thus, 17 observations out of a total of 29 were carried out with two observers.

3.4.3 Informal conversations with headteachers

Apart from conducting the observations and interviews, an additional source of data was informal conversations with the headteachers of the two subject schools. They were 'informal' and 'conversations' rather than 'interviews' as they were not recorded and so not

transcribed, though notes were taken. The aim was to collect more general information about the characteristics of the schools' populations, such as how many pupils they had, their ethnic backgrounds, the numbers of them who presented with difficulties related to behaviour, the familial circumstances of pupils in general and those identified with BESD. Also information regarding children identified with BESD were crossed with the headteachers –the characteristics presented by pupils, causing factors, time presenting with the difficulties and steps taken by the school to address the needs. Six such conversations took place –two with each headteacher. Information provided was recorded on a form, in a manageable way, so it could be used later during analysis (see Appendix 9).

3.5 The data analysis process

3.5.1 Briefing sessions held in each school – from ideas to analysis

Prior to beginning the research, a short briefing session was arranged with and carried out in each of the subject schools (one for School A and one for School B), with the headteachers, deputy headteachers, most of the teachers and support staff present. This session took place on the first day of the time allotted to carry out the study at each school.

The session covered:

- the nature and objectives of the research
- the nature of the participation that was sought and, therefore, the role of the participants
- ethical issues and confidentiality
- how much time would be needed for the interviews and observation sessions.

This took approximately 20 minutes, then the teachers were asked to express their concerns. The questions they asked raised my awareness of a sensitive issue – the political, educational and media pressure exercised on the subject schools, especially School A, due to its location and the sociocultural background of its pupil population because of the longstanding ‘Cyprus Problem’ (the 1974 Turkish invasion of Cyprus). Many pupils attending School A come from different ethnic minorities and some speak Turkish (see Chapter 4), so staff working in the school are particularly sensitised to this issue. Because of this and the fact that school is part of a ZEP, it is under great pressure from the MOEC to raise educational standards.

This meant, and in line with Powneys and Watts’ (1987) recommendation, that when interviewing or observing, it was necessary to be understanding and thoughtful about issues that could be sensitive for the participants. Another effect was that there was an unwillingness on the part of some of the teachers to participate in the research – especially the observation sessions. The briefing sessions enabled a certain bridging of the gap to be achieved between researcher and participants and, to some extent, helped the teachers to understand the value that was being placed on their views and practices.

3.5.2 The preliminary and main phases of data analysis

Once the study had been completed, there was data that had been collected from three different sources: recorded interviews, observation notes and data from informal conversations with headteachers about the schools and their pupil populations. It was then that the ‘main phase’ of the data analysis process began (see Appendix 8).

The data were systematically processed as a 'preliminary phase' (see Appendix 8), which fed into the research process as it raised issues that needed to be further clarified, such as for example the management of interview recordings and their processing.

A recording device and a laptop were used throughout the data-collection process. Together, they enabled large amounts of interview recordings and observation notes to be gathered and stored securely in folders in the computer. Once in electronic form, an initial system for organising the data was set up. This was a particularly important step as leaving a large amount of broadly unstructured transcribed interviews and descriptive research findings to the main phase of analysis would have been to succumb to the illusion that qualitative data analysis is straightforward.

Despite their diverse, multifaceted and rich nature, such data are prone to complications relating to objectivity, representation and validity, for example (Miles and Huberman, 1994). To avoid this, it was considered vital to address key issues early on, such as 'how to capture the complexity of reality that is studied' and 'how to make convincing sense of it' (Strauss, 1987: 10).

Miles (1979) notes that, despite the positive aspects of qualitative data, when it comes to the time required to analyse them and write up the results, it can become overwhelming for researchers as there are none of the well-formulated methods of analysis that exist for quantitative data. There is also little guidance and no clear 'conventions' to help them avoid 'self-delusion' and protect themselves from presenting 'unreliable or invalid conclusions' (Miles, 1979: 590).

This study was no exception as its exploratory nature and relatively open approach created one critical issue that any qualitative researcher is likely to come across – an avalanche of information (Miles and Huberman, 1994). In order to deal with such a considerable amount of data, a systematic and consistent approach was needed to simplify the organisation, presentation and interpretation of findings in order to form valid and reliable conclusions.

The main phase of the analysis process included a thorough and detailed processing of all data gathered from both Schools A and B, reducing them to a manageable amount and re-presenting them in a form that could be ‘appreciated by the intended audience’ (Powney and Watts, 1987: 161). It was a systematic and inductive process of content analysis that allowed a lot of reflective work to be done on the data and ambiguities to be identified. Time and distance meant that it was not possible to have further discussions with those participants whose responses in their interviews or practice during the observation sessions seemed inconsistent or was open to interpretation. The fact, however, that two different tools were used to collect the data limited the detrimental effect this could have had as there was a further source of information to refer to when clarification or verification was needed.

Huberman and Miles’ (1994) discussion of the three concurrent and interwoven stages of analysis proved helpful when carrying out the main phase of the data analysis process:

- data reduction
- data display
- drawing conclusions (see Appendix 8).

Although the substantive data-reduction process took place in the main data analysis phase, the actions of ‘selecting, abstracting and transforming’ data began during the preliminary

phase and occurred continuously throughout the course of the research. As Huberman and Miles (1994: 11) point out:

Data reduction is a form of analysis that sharpens, sorts, focuses, discards or organises in such a way that final conclusions can be drawn and verified.

One way to achieve a reduction in data is by means of content analysis. Content analysis has many qualities, including, importantly, its transparency and the flexibility of its methodology (Bryman, 2008: 288):

The coding scheme and the sampling procedures can be clearly set out so that replications and follow-up studies are feasible.

Such transparency can lead to greater objectivity and, thus, a higher degree of reliability (Bryman, 2008).

Cohen et al. (2007) outline 11 steps for the process of content analysis, each equally important. These steps form a valuable framework and so were put into practice in this study for the analysis process for both the interview and observation data. These steps as outlined by Cohen et al., (2007:476) are the following:

- identify the research questions and population to be studied (step 1- 3)
- define the context of generation of findings (step 4)
- define the units of analysis and coding system (steps 5-6)
- develop the categories of analysis (step 7)
- conduct the coding and categorisation of data (step 8)
- conduct the analysis (step 9)

- development of summaries of findings and provide descriptions of findings (steps 10-11)

Having reduced the data by following the above 11 steps, the next stage began, which was to find the best ways to display the refined and organised data. As Huberman and Miles (1994: 11) highlight, findings have in the past most frequently been set out in the form of ‘extended text’, but currently they also appear in other forms, such as charts, graphs and different variations of matrices. In this study, a combination of forms has been used as appropriate to make the data easily accessible.

Next came the third stage of the data analysis process – drawing conclusions. Although formally coming at the end, it, in fact, was a continuous thread running right through from the beginnings of this study to the end. These were noted in an open way at first and, as the study progressed, added to, modified and so on in the light of the data collected. The preliminary conclusions in this case can be drawn, although ‘inchoate and vague’ (Huberman and Miles, 1994: 11), from reading Chapter 4, while Chapters 5 and 6 discuss the different arguments relating to the findings and present the final conclusions.

3.5.3 The processing of interview and observation data

As discussed previously the main tools used in this study to collect data were interviews and observations. Apart from these two, informal conversations with headteachers enabled the collection of information and construction of cases. In total, 22 interviews were conducted, transcribed and contributed to the findings of this study. In addition, 29 observation sessions conducted and reflective notes were made during separate informal discussions undertaken with the headteachers and EP.

3.5.3.1 The interview data

From the interview data, considerable information was gathered about the teachers' roles in school, their qualifications, how many years' teaching experience they had (including time they had spent working in ZEPs) and how much training and knowledge of BESD they had. This, plus the informal discussions with the headteachers, SEN teacher and EP, together with information provided by teachers who were both observed and interviewed, also generated a rounded picture of the pupils with BESD (that is, their behavioural characteristics and the difficulties they displayed at school, noted in Part A of the observation form – see Appendix 7). This information is presented in tabular form in Chapter 4 (Table 9:159).

The interview data was collected by making digital recordings and then making transcriptions close to the times the interviews took place so that they had all been completed by the end of the data-collection process. This design was arrived at in the planning stages following Robson's (2002: 289) recommendation that:

It is too late to start thinking about analysis after the interviewing is done. In flexible research design, the implications for analysis of amassing large amounts of interview (or any other) data have to be thought through before you commit yourself to data collection.

Important points made by Powney and Watts (1987: 147) were also taken into account:

Even when only one person is speaking and enunciating clearly, there is always the problem of how to convey emphasis. Gestures, faltering, pauses, voice quality, facial expression, postures and the proximity of speakers all give that additional layer of meaning to the words spoken. However, in preparing a transcript, it is necessary to withhold expectations one would have of the written word.

The above arguments are the main reason the transcription was not assigned to a third party, nor left until the end of the data-collection schedule.

Verbatim transcriptions were prepared that also included most of the background information. After a time, an improvement was made, which was to include this tracking information at the beginning of each question and each response (minute/second). The advantage of this was that, each time it was necessary to go through the transcripts again to find particular information; it was also possible to go to that particular time in the recording and replay the conversation.

Another useful strategy was adding notes at the beginning of each transcription describing the interview – the context, environment, as well as any remarks made by the participant - which was very helpful in terms of developing and addressing the research problem.

Excel and Microsoft Word were used to tabulate the interview data (and, to some extent, the observation data), as well as information about the teachers interviewed, lessons observed and demographic information collected from the informal conversations. Information about pupils with BESD, referrals to the EPD and support given by the SEN teacher were all processed using Microsoft Word.

3.5.3.2 The observation data

Two sets of data were collected as a result of the observation sessions:

- unstructured reflective notes – comments on and descriptions of incidents that took place during lessons
- structured data recording teachers' approaches and pupils' behaviour during lessons.

For the first set of data and, in fact, that resulting from the interviews, too, content analysis was applied to process, analyse and report the unstructured data (see Appendix 8). Content analysis enabled the thick, raw data to be refined and organised into themes, essential examples being summarised to draw conclusions from later. The summaries of observational notes were also organised in tabular form (see Appendix 11), with key information for each observation included in the table. These summaries enabled an overview of the observational material to be generated and considered in relation to the research problem.

The notes taken during observations that included comments and descriptions of incidents were grouped into the following themes and were further refined. This proved helpful for comparing, observation data with responses made in the interviews.

- Classroom milieu:
 - physical environment and seating arrangements
 - resources and technology
 - Teaching Assistant.
- Teachers' approaches with pupils with BESD:
 - personal and professional qualities
 - actions during the lesson, behaviour of pupils

For the second set of data, qualitative analysis was applied by means of Microsoft Excel (see Appendix 12). First, data collected by both observers for teachers' actions and pupils' behaviour was transferred to a computer. Two sets of scores were created – one for the first observer and one for the second. Then the formula for inter-observer reliability (Cohen et al., 2007) was applied to the scores. Bar charts were also created to show the approaches

used by the teachers and the pupils' behaviour. The charts included the findings from each observation that was conducted.

3.6 Trustworthiness

In the design of any piece of research, it is important to address data issues such as:

- validity and objectivity
- reliability
- generalisability of conclusions drawn from them.

These issues are discussed further next.

3.6.1 Validity and objectivity

The claims that all studies contain, including those of qualitative studies, may or may not be valid (Yin, 2011). A key quality check of these claims is validity. Also an important point made by Yin (2011:78) suggests the following:

A valid study is one that has properly collected and interpreted its data so that conclusions accurately reflect and represent the real world that is studied.

Validity, according to Cohen et al., (2007) can take different forms and it can be addressed through the depth of researcher's honesty, richness, the participants included in the study, and objectivity(Cohen et al., 2007).

Authors reporting on their research devote considerable space to exploring these issues and suggesting possible strategies to address them (Powney and Watts, 1987; Kvale, 1996; Robson, 2002; Cohen et al., 2007). With reference to validity, for instance, Robson (2002) identifies types of threats to it, such as those that lie in description and interpretation,

whereas Cohen et al. (2007) argue that these may be generated by various sources, including race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, status, social class and age. These may result from researchers' actions before the collection process (due to the design of an interview, its structure, layout and types of questions and observations, say) or their impact in the setting or else the participants' reactions to researchers during interviews or while being observed (being cooperative, defensive, enthusiastic, apathetic, for example).

It is the researcher's responsibility, therefore, to control for biases, such as the following ones recommended by Cohen et al., (2007:150):

- 'attitudes, opinions and expectations of the interviewer'
- 'the tendency' to seek out or be more alert to responses that correspond to preconceived ideas
- misinterpretations and misunderstandings, either on the part of interviewers or respondents.

With regard to validity and the interview method, Gray (2004) suggests that validity relates to the applicability of it as an instrument for the research being carried out and the nature of the questions asked. Questions, Gray (2004) argues, must be clearly formed and asked and researchers must ensure that participants understand the questions prior to answering them. To this end, it is worth noting that the types of question chosen can itself become a threat to validity. Thus, for this study, the piloting of both instruments used, but particularly the interview, allowed problems relating to questions and so on to be raised and resolved prior to the actual fieldwork.

Furthermore, returning to the threat to validity that description can pose, this is associated with a failure of researchers to provide a valid or truthful description of their research in general and the data-collection process in particular (Robson, 2002). The thick description

that is inherent in qualitative studies (Stake, 2010), as it is in this study, does mean, however, that if clarity and thoroughness are attempted by researchers, assumptions concerning the degree of validity of the reported findings can still be made.

The ‘description threat’ to validity, mentioned by Robson (2002: 171), was behind the decision to record rather than make notes for all the interviews. Then, transcriptions were prepared soon after each interview had been completed. In order to achieve the best possible transcriptions, a digital recording device was used as the resulting data can be processed better, stored and accessed more easily and makes for more flexibility throughout the data analysis process than other options. In a similar way, for the observation sessions, data was first recorded on forms and then transferred into an electronic form for further processing and subsequent analysis (Robson, 2002).

The second threat to validity noted by Robson (2002), that of the ‘interpretation’ of the meanings of participants’ perceptions as researchers may make idiosyncratic choices that do not accurately reflect the reality of the situation. An important step to be taken by researchers in order to minimise this threat, Robson (2002) explains, is for them to explicitly set out how they arrived at a particular interpretation. To this end, for this study, a consistent coding system was devised and used to process the data from interviews and observations and it proved to be a valuable way of addressing this issue.

Guba and Lincoln (2005) note that neither one method nor a collection of methods can enable us to discover an ultimate level of knowledge as, in the majority of cases, the outcomes of research are products of interpretation. This argument is reinforced by the notion that ‘human phenomena are themselves subjects of controversy’ (Guba and Lincoln, 2005: 205).

A strategy to ensure validity, suggested by Robson (2002:175) is to ‘leave an audit trail’ – that is, keep a record of all the researchers’ activities. In this study, such a ‘trail’ has been established, as can be discerned from the discussion earlier in this chapter concerning the overall design, the decisions regarding sample, the collection and analysis of data and secondary procedures (such as piloting, the briefing session and employment of a second observer). This has been done to ensure that the findings are as valid, reliable and objective as possible.

As noted previously, Powney and Watts (1987) and Cohen et al. (2007) point out that relying on a single data-collection method is unlikely to establish a well-grounded, real picture of a subject of study. One way to validate interview data is to compare them with data collected via another instrument that has already been shown to be valid. That is why both interviews and observations were carried out in this study, in an effort to transfer meaning free from biases, avoid the making of naive assertions and, instead, come to conclusions that exhibit due rigour and value the different realities that different people experience.

Objectivity, rather like validity, albeit also a rather complex and ambiguous notion (Kirk and Miller, 1986), is a key issue that researchers are called on to address from the earliest stages of a study. Kirk and Miller (1986: 21) describe objectivity as the ‘simultaneous realisation of as much reliability and validity as possible’. This topic often features in the research methodology literature. Kvale (1996: 65), for example, discusses the issue of objectivity with respect to the interview option and argues that it is ‘neither an objective nor a subjective method’ as, by its very nature, it is an ‘intersubjective interaction’. In addition, Kvale seems to reject claims that suggest a qualitative interview lacks objectivity and,

indeed, can provide objective data free of bias. Moreover, Kvale (1996: 64) argues that objectivity must be discussed with respect to three conceptions of objectivity:

- freedom from bias
- intersubjective knowledge
- as reflecting the nature of the object.

Powney and Watts (1987: 169) associate the notion of objectivity with trusting the researcher's 'story'. They argue that, as readers are often provided with little detail about the research process, they can only make assumptions about the methods and procedures used. Objectivity, therefore, is about feeling confident that 'the results obtained are reasonable and can be justified'. It is also important, therefore, that researchers be explicit about all the parts of their interviewing process to increase such confidence.

Objectivity in terms of participants' responses in interviews has remained a constant concern throughout this study. That is because, according to Powney and Watts (1987: 109), the 'pressures' to which participants may be susceptible, 'personal' or 'idiosyncratic', may prevent them from being open in their responses, feeling confident enough to express their views or trust the researchers. In the case of this study, examples of reasons that could have such an effect might include the participant's position in the school, fears of possible consequences arising from their responses, not feeling comfortable about being recorded and so on.

As Powney and Watts (1987: 109) go on to argue, these pressures do not prevent participants from 'holding back or softening information'.

For these reasons, in this study, as well as comparing participants' interview data with their observation data, as noted above, to check for objectivity, the interview data from School A was compared with that from School B. It was decided to do this as, particularly in School A, the participants seemed more reluctant to participate than did those in School B – indeed, if it had not been for the persistent requests and encouragement of the headteacher, the participation rate would have been less. Interestingly, the results were largely similar when a thorough comparison of categories and themes was made, indicating that this difference in enthusiasm has not affected the objectivity of the findings.

In line with the recommendations gleaned from reviewing the literature, a number of strategies were employed in this study to ensure its validity and objectivity as much as possible. As well as the actions mentioned above, the research instruments were piloted prior to use to address potential threats to its validity and objectivity, including ambiguity and any other issues relating to the questions, format and procedure followed for conducting the interviews, as well as how much time and space to allow for the sessions and responses to each question. It was also anticipated that the interview and observation processes themselves could be a potent threat to validity (Kvale, 1996; Cohen et al, 2007). Thus, steps were taken to lessen the sense of intrusion generated by the researchers' presence, including briefing participants and, thus, creating a friendly and trusting environment, keeping the questions simple (avoiding ambiguous, complex and leading ones) and allowing the interviewees to do all the talking. The experience gained from piloting the instruments meant that the potential pitfalls could be avoided as much as possible.

3.6.2 Reliability

Reliability is largely associated, in quantitative research, with consistency and replicability over time and factors relating to the research tools and groups of respondents concerned (Cohen et al., 2007). In qualitative research, however, reliability can be considered as Cohen et al. (2007: 149) argue as:

a fit between what researchers record as data and what actually occurs in the natural setting that is being researched

The issue of reliability has been a key concern during the course of this study. In line with the above Cohen et al's (2007) argument concerning the reliability, much value has been attached to being thorough and careful about the choice and details of the methods used, developing reliable research practices and being honest and transparent regarding data collection process.

Cohen et al., (2007) associate reliability with equivalence and argue that reliability can either be achieved though using equivalent forms of a test or data collection tool. Concerning the second, as Cohen et al., (2007: 147) further explain:

if more than one researcher is taking part in a piece of research then, human judgement being fallible, agreement between all researchers must be achieved, through ensuring that each researcher enters data in the same way.

A useful research tool for checking the validity or truthfulness of participants' responses in this study was the observation. With the observations I sought to explore the subject of study from a different perspective –that of the observer. As Cohen et al (2007) and Bryman (2008) state, employing observations and interviews for data collection enable the researcher to create a more comprehensive picture of the subject of study and allow a

triangulation of findings. For this reason it was important for the observation tool to be meticulously designed and its reliability to be checked.

As part as the observation design is concerned, the pilot study helped in deciding for its final form as well as for checking for its reliability. For the purpose of reliability checking, a second observer was decided to be employed especially for recording information relating to the ‘structured part of the observation’ (see Appendix 7, Part B, Section A) –the part which was designed to collect structured and coded notes and so direct correlations could be made. During the actual data collection process both observers were collecting data for the same lesson at the same time but independently (Cohen et al, 2007). The second observer produced a second set of observation data and then this data was compared with the data of the first observer in order to establish the degree of agreement between the two. This helped to establish the degree to which there was ‘inter-observer agreement’ (Cohen et al, 2007:147).

Cohen et al. (2009: 147) recommend a simple formula that can be used to calculate inter-observer agreement, as a percentage:

$$\frac{\text{Number of actual agreements}}{\text{Number of possible agreements}} \times 100 = \% \text{ agreement between observers}$$

In the case of this study, the second observer recorded 17 out of a total of 29 observation sessions. So the calculation concerning the agreement between the two observers could be considered valid for 59.32% of the total number of recordings that could be made using both observers for the observations in both schools. Given this, assumptions concerning the reliability of the rest of the data recorded can be made.

The inter-observer agreement was calculated based on the above formula, suggested by Cohen et al., (2007). Given the results of this calculation it seems that the researcher and the second observer in this study seem to agree in 282 recordings out of 350 made in the 17 observation sessions (80.57 percent). Table 4, shows details the agreement rate between the two observers:

Table 4: Inter-observer agreement

	Times expected to agree	Times agree	Times do not agree	Inter-observer agreement (%)
Teachers' actions	175	137	38	78.29
Pupils' behaviour	175	145	30	82.86
Overall	350	282	68	80.57

3.6.3 Generalisability

Robson (2002:176) discusses to kinds of generalisability, the 'internal generalisability' and the 'external'. Since this study was a case study much value was attached to internal generalisability –the extent to which the findings are generalisable within the field of study. In the case of this study, it would mean the extent to which the findings would also be representative of or apply to other schools with similar features or the views, perceptions and experiences of the participants in this study would also be shared by others elsewhere.

Similarly Bryman (2008) refers to generalisability as being limited when studies involve collecting data from a small number of participants. The question arises, then – can the findings of this study, conducted in two ZEP schools, be treated as representative of all

other cases of ZEP schools in Cyprus? As Stake (2010) argues, turning the question on its head, it is wrong to believe that a case study *cannot* render valid generalisations. Even a small amount of qualitative research, though rarely, ‘can bolster generalisations’ (Stake, 2010: 197).

Any case study such as the one reported here draws on a sample from a certain population that is interviewed or observed. This means that the choice of sample, particularly, as in this case, if it is purposely selected, is unlikely to be representative of all those in the total population (in this case, that would be all teachers working in all ZEP schools). In addition, the researcher’s aim is to provide a contextual understanding of a *certain* phenomenon rather than make generalisations regarding that broader category of phenomenon.

This study is a case study, so the extent to which its findings might be generalisable and therefore valuable outside the context of the study was a significant issue to address. My objective throughout has been to present the data on the cases, reflect on the experience gained during the research process, raise questions for further future research and leave others to draw their own conclusions. Whether or not the population of this study is representative outside of itself, it is hoped that the cases examined will help those concerned about education, policymakers and individual teachers with an interest in ZEP schools and pupils with BESD with their own thinking or support them in their own work with these pupils.

3.7. Piloting the research instruments

It has been argued that piloting research instruments before conducting the study itself is essential. It enables researchers to develop their research questions and plan the research,

honing the design of the research instruments to avoid problems later (Robson, 2002; Cohen et al., 2007; Yin 2010). For instance, Yin (2011: 37) supports this process, writing that:

Pilot studies help to test and refine one or more aspects of a final study – for example, its design, fieldwork procedures, data collection instruments, or analysis plans. In this sense, the pilot study provides another opportunity to practise.

For these reasons, the research instruments used in this study were piloted, as it was anticipated that it would also help to deal with issues of their feasibility, validity and reliability. Two types of interviews (structured and semi-structured), the observation process and the observation form were piloted.

Both the structured and semi-structured interviews had the same content. In the structured interview, that was prepared and piloted, both the questions and response categories were predetermined (Cohen et al., 2007). The design of the interview and the nature of questions included in it did not allow interviewees much flexibility in expressing their perceptions. Instead, they had to place their responses into the predetermined categories or select from the categories that were offered to them (Cohen et al., 2007: 206). There was also an open-ended element to this type of interview, but, again, the choice of responses that could be made was limited. This type of interview was given to a primary school in Cyprus, in November 2008. A total of 27 postal interviews and consent forms were sent to the school, but 2 months later only 4 participants had returned their interview questionnaires, giving a return rate of 14.8%.

From the responses provided, it was anticipated that this type of interview would not offer the kind of data that was required in order to answer the research questions. Moreover, the poor return rate and the nature of responses provided were factors impeding in choosing this

type of interviewing for the actual research. Also, to achieve a better return rate, it would need to be distributed either in person or to a larger sample. It was a concern, too, that this kind of interview would require quantitative analysis. Therefore I concluded that I should opt for semi-structured interviews.

A semi-structured interview form was then designed that included guiding open-ended questions. This interview was piloted with a 32-year-old teacher working in a ZEP and the outcomes from this interview helped a lot in refining the content of the interview guide. The interview was piloted again in the school where pilot observations took place when its final form was ready.

The second data collection tool to pilot was that of observation. A school for pupils with BESD in Birmingham was contacted and as soon as the necessary consents had been given, almost two weeks were spent in the school testing the pilot. During the first week, three initial observations were conducted, which helped crystallise what types of data needed to be collected, what kinds of behavior to include in the structured part of the form and what approaches and practices teachers employ.

Different behaviour and responses to teachers' actions were observed and this helped with decisions regarding how to organise them on the observation form. The review of literature (Cole et al., 1998; Daniels et al., 1998a; Evans et al., 2003; Harden et al., 2003), meanwhile, helped in understanding how teachers work with these pupils and, similarly, enabled the necessary amendments to be made to the observation form.

Following this, a proper pilot of the observation was undertaken, with seven observation sessions of four teachers. These helped to further refine the categories that would be

included in the final form. Most importantly, however, the recording system was also practised throughout the pilot. Moreover having completed the semi-structured interview guide as well, it was tested again in the school to check its final form and address any last complexities.

The time spent in the school for pupils with BESD in Birmingham proved very useful in developing the observation form and identifying a complexity that could potentially have become a limitation for the study itself – that is, the transferability of the term BESD to the Cypriot context as the term is not widely known and used there.

Further, piloting made it possible to:

- check the format and how to apply the research instruments (the interview and observation forms) in real time and in context so that potential threats to validity and reliability could be identified
- check the content of the interview form and minimise the effects of threats to validity – checking for any ambiguous, complex, leading, redundant or inappropriate interview questions
- gain feedback on the response categories and construct a coding system for recording information to aid later analysis
- identify potential shortcomings and complexities in using the observation form, such as the appropriateness of coding in separate *pupil's progress* and *teacher's actions* sections, time available to complete the observations, lapses in attention, and think of ways to address them before any harm was done to the study itself

- develop a recording system to help with completing and analysing the data entered on the observation form.

Valuable conclusions were arrived at by going through the piloting process, some of which are summarised below.

- **Conclusions drawn from pilot of the interview guide**

- For the study itself, the interview questions would still be used as a plan of and to guide the conversation, but the wording and order could be changed when required.
- It was found that some of the questions were unclear, others redundant, so it would be improved if these were removed.
- The one-to-one interview was the best format.

- **Conclusions drawn from pilot of the observation form**

A coding system was developed for the observation form (Section A, Part B) to record the approaches of the teacher and behavior of the pupil or pupils with BESD.

That having a second observer would enable it to be checked for its reliability.

3.7.1 Lessons learned from pilot study

Conducting a pilot study is a valuable technique that enables researchers to test their research instruments, evaluate and refine their methods of data collection and analysis, as well as address practical issues pertaining to the research process (Cohen et al., 2007). For these reasons, a pilot study was carried out as part of the preparations for this study. It enabled issues concerning the feasibility and reliability of the two instruments that it was

planned would be used to collect data (see previous section, 3.7) and the difficulties of planning the school visits and gaining positive responses from prospective participants to be raised.

Lessons learned included the need to opt for the instruments that would be received and responded to most positively by the participants. So, for instance the option of postal interviews was abandoned due to the poor return rate experienced during the pilot study phase. Also, issues of time constraints and difficulties relating to planning the school visits and contacting the prospective participants, as well as the difficulties encountered depending on the types of interviewing techniques employed all surfaced during the pilot study. For instance, following the pilot study, it became clear that one-to-one interviews would be more practical and convenient for participants than group interviews due to the individual time constraints the participants were under. Furthermore, it became clear that also conducting observation sessions in schools with pupils with BESD allowed for teachers' approaches and actions during their work in their classes to be clearly documented together with the behaviour and progress of the pupils.

Thus, the overall experience gained from conducting a pilot study was very helpful when it came to planning the actual research process that would be used and refining the research working plan. Moreover, it proved valuable to practise using the recording methods and interview approaches.

The pilot study confirmed that studying teachers' experiences and perceptions offers a valuable key to improving teaching and learning processes, especially for pupils with BESD, and the best way to elicit them is through semistructured interviews.

3.8 Research follow-up

Reading through the research reported in this thesis, it can be seen that the data-collection and analysis processes have been initiated within an ethical framework, ensuring that there has been no fabrication of findings and the participants have not been deceived in any way. Accordingly, and having made commitments to the participants, copies of the full set of transcriptions of the interviews and records kept during the observation sessions were emailed to the respective participants and headteachers of Schools A and B after the writing-up stage had been completed –for interviews transcriptions were given to participants as soon as they were transcribed. A copy of the completed thesis will be sent to the Pedagogical Institute in Cyprus (Appendix 4).

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings arrived at as a result of the data-collection process. The findings from the interviews with and observations of the headteachers, deputy headteachers, teachers, EP, SEN teacher, SEN TA, interpreter and ZEP coordinator are reported.

4.1 Instruments and participants

Although, as noted, careful attention was given to the design, wording and application of the interview form, the interviews still produced a vast amount of information. For this reason, a selection of findings is presented, chosen on the basis that they contribute to the development of the argument and are representative of the rest of the data on that topic. Key extracts from interview transcripts are reported to highlight points being discussed.

Additionally, reflections on the results of the observation sessions are reported and provide an alternative viewpoint from that of the participants' responses in the interviews.

In preparing to report on the findings, three concerns arose:

- complexities relating to using data originally in Greek in a research report published in English
- which approach to apply

- securing the privacy and confidentiality of the participants.

Regarding the first of these, as the study was of schools in Cyprus, the raw data was in Greek, but the findings had to be reported in English. This added an extra level of difficulty to transcribing the recordings of the interviews. The possibility of misapprehending what participants meant or altering their meaning when translating from Greek to English and then these mistaken impressions affecting the report on the findings was a very real concern. To avoid this outcome, the recordings were replayed many times and, on occasion, ambiguities queried with participants before the transcripts were finalised.

Second, there was the matter of which approach to use to report the findings. Robson (2002) and Cohen et al. (2007), discussing the writing up of a case study, seem to be in agreement that there is no standard approach to reporting findings. Thus, in this case, the guiding principles accord with Robson's (2002) discussion on the reporting of case studies, and that of Cohen et al., (2007: 262) on 'fitness for audience' and 'fitness for purpose'.

The third concern was that of protecting the privacy and confidentiality of the participants. This was achieved by following basic ethical principles and making this a priority (Chapter 3, section 3.2.7).

Central to the focus of the information reported in this chapter are the perceptions, experiences and understandings that teachers and associated professionals working with pupils with BESD have regarding good practice. The following sections discuss the findings from the interviews and observations conducted in the two subject schools. The data reported have been collected from a relatively small sample of participants, but they

represent a good percentage of the teachers and associated professionals working in the subject schools (26 out of 38 people working in the two schools -68.42%). Although having this relatively small sample of interviewees had the advantage of reducing the level and number of complexities relating to data analysis and reporting on the data, the disadvantage is that, as a result, there is a potential limit to the extent to which it would be possible to generalise from the findings of this study.

Taking into consideration the purpose of this study and the potential audience, the data was reported for each school by:

- portraying the cases –providing background information about the subject schools
- conveying the participants’ perceptions and experiences of good practice when working with pupils with BESD
- presenting the findings to shed light on the research problem and emerging questions.

Tables 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 below summarise the key information with regard to the participants and the data-collection tools used for the study. First, Table 5 shows that a total of 22 interviews and 29 observations were conducted.

Table 5: The participants per instrument and school

School	Instrument	
	Interviews	Observations
A	9	17
B	13	12
Totals	22	29

Table 6 presents a breakdown of the sources of the data collected during each stage of the research process, including the pilot study in England and both of the main rounds of data collection in Cyprus. It shows the number of people contacted, the response rate and the total numbers of observations and interviews that were carried out at each stage and overall.

Table 6: Breakdown of the data collected at each stage of the study

		Number of prospective participants contacted	Returned consents	Final Response Rate (%)	Final number of interv.	Final number of Observ.
Pilot study observations (England)		7	7	100%		
Pilot study interviews (Cyprus)		27	4	14.8%	4	
First round of data collection: School A	Classroom Observation	15	9	60.0%		17*
	Interviews	15	9	60.0%	9	
Second round of data collection: School B	Classroom Observation	20	7	35.0%		12**
	Interviews	20	13	65.0%	13	
Totals School A School B					22	29
*8 participants x 2 lessons @ 40mins+1x 1x60mins = 17 observations (9 teachers) ** 5 participants x2x40mins + 1x1x40mins +1x1x40mins = 12 observations (7 teachers)						

From the information reported in Table 6, the final response rate for School A, for both interviews and observations was 60%, while participants in School B responded more positively to taking part in interviews (65%) than observations (35%). Also totally 17 observations in School A and 12 in School were conducted.

The following are also important to mention:

- totally 26 people out of 38 people working in the two schools took part in the study
- 17 female and 9 male participants
- 10 participants were only interviewed
- 4 participants were only observed (A2, A4, A5, A10)
- 12 were both interviewed and observed

This information is detailed in Table 7. Table 7 summarises the information gathered about the participants who were interviewed, such as their gender (17 female participants and 9 male), the positions they held at their schools, how many years' experience they had, how many years they had been working in the subject schools and whether or not they had received any training for or had any experience of working with pupils with BESD. It also shows which participants were both interviewed and observed (indicated by two lower-case letters in the 'Participants' codes' column, far left).

According to the data, the average amount of work experience the teachers had was 14.4 years, while they had worked in a subject ZEP school for a minimum of 1 year to a maximum of 5 years. Concerning their training or experience relating to BESD, 19 of the 22 interview participants stated that they had received no training for, nor did they have previous experience of, working with pupils with BESD (that is, approximately 86.36% of them). A total of three stated that they had attended an in-service training seminar provided about working with pupils presenting with challenging behaviour.

Table 7: The participants who were interviewed

Participants' codes	Gender	Years' work/ teaching experience	Years working in ZEP School A or B	Position held in school	Training concerning BESD (√ = Yes)	School	Lesson observed	Lessons observed
mm ⁴	F	11	2	Teacher		A	A3 ⁵	
n	M	20	–	EP		A	–	
o	F	5	5	Interpreter		A	–	
pp	M	19	2	Teacher		A	A1	2
qq	F	22	3	Music teacher		A	A8, A9	2
rr	F	20	1	Deputy headteacher	√	A	A7	2
ss	F	10	1	Deputy headteacher		A	A6	2
t	M	32	5	Headteacher		A	–	
u	M	13	6	ZEP coordinator		A	–	
aa	F	11	1	Teacher		B	B3	2
b	F	22	1	Headteacher		B	–	
cc	M	6	1	Teacher	√	B	B2	2
ff	M	16	2	Teacher		B	B1	1
ee	F	10	4	Teacher		B	B5	2
dd	F	9	4	Teacher		B	B1	2
g	F	10	4	SEN teacher (SEN unit)	√	B	–	
h	F	10	5	TA (SEN unit)		B	–	
i	M	3	1	Teacher		B	–	
jj	M	6	2	Teacher		B	B4	2
k	F	24	1	Headteacher		B	–	
l	F	17	5	TA (SEN unit)		B	–	
vv	F	12	2	Teacher		B	B6	

Table 8 sets out the details of the observation sessions. It shows the grades/classes visited (A1 = Year A, Group 1, for example), the subjects that were being taught during the sessions, sizes of the classes, genders of teachers and pupils and pupils' nationalities. It also shows whether or not there was a TA working closely with the teacher during the sessions. Altogether, 16 pupils were included in the observation sample, the majority of whom were boys and Roma (9 out of 16). Only one girl was identified by teachers as having BESD, so

⁴ Double letter indicates that participant was both observed during lesson and interviewed

⁵ The coding system used for observations: A= School A, 1=observation order –A1= First observation in School A

no more balance of gender could be achieved, although this reflects the fact that more boys present with BESD than girls in the subject schools.

Table 8: Information about the observation sessions

Observation Codes	Grade/class	Subjects taught	Gender of teacher	Number of pupils in class	Times observed	Gender of pupil	Nationality	TA (✓ = Yes)
A1	Στ2	Maths	M	13	2	G	Roma	
A2	A1	Literacy	F	13	1	B	Roma	
A3	E2	Literacy	M	12	2	B	Roma	
A4	Στ1	Maths	M	13	2	B	Roma	
A5	Δ1	Literacy	F	19	2	B	Roma	
A6	E1	Literacy	F	10	2	B	Roma	
A7	Γ1	Maths	F	10	2	B	Roma	
A8	Στ1	Music	F	13	1	B	Cypriot	
A9	E1	Music	F	10	1	B	Roma	
A10	B1	Literacy	F	13	2	B	Roma	
B1	Δ1	Maths English	F	19	1 1	B	African	
B2	Στ2	Maths Literacy	M	20	1 1	B	Cypriot	
B3	E2	Literacy	F	19	2	B	Cypriot	
B4	Γ1	Science	M	16	2	B	Cypriot	
B5	A1	Literacy	F	16	2	B	Romania	
B6	B3	Maths	M	14	2	B	Cypriot	

It was also important to establish the nature of the difficulties displayed by the pupils, to ensure that they had been correctly presenting with BESD. For this reason, in each case, the teachers were asked to:

- describe the nature of the pupil's difficulties – for example, language acquisition, behaviour in and outside the classroom and any other relevant learning difficulties, whether or not there were emotional difficulties

- explain the present situation at school concerning the pupil – if there had been an official assessment of his or her needs or the school had requested it, but this it had not yet taken place.

The teachers provided information about the pupils. This information was supplemented by the EP and SEN teacher, allowing a portrait of each pupil to emerge and for the teachers' descriptions to be verified. Table 9 summarises the descriptions and explanations given. As can be seen, many of the pupils, especially in School A, presented with language difficulties and, the participants said, these were linked with various other learning difficulties, such as poor reading and spelling skills, difficulties in understanding what they read (including basic directions, forming phrases and blending them together in an essay form and so on). Some of the teachers did associate learning difficulties and BESD, but the majority provided descriptions arising from different factors related to culture and family (8 out of 10 pupils were Roma). In addition, participants in school A, more than in School B, talked about attendance issues with pupils with BESD. It was most commonly reported that some of these pupils do not come to school systematically or, when they do, they also leave school for extended periods of time (up to three weeks) and then come back again. Pupils in School B presented similar characteristics; however the majority of those identified as presenting with BESD (4 out of 6) were Cypriot pupils.

Table 9: Pupils' behaviour difficulties

Codes	Gender	Nationality	Language difficulties (✓ = Yes)	Officially identified by EPD	Characteristics
A1	G	Roma	✓		Attendance issues, ⁽¹⁾ constantly coming to school without books, withdrawn, poor social skills, does not socialise or have friends- long absences from the school for family reasons
A2	B	Roma	✓		Attendance issues, mainly aggressive
A3	B	Roma			Challenging behaviour ⁽²⁾ – violent towards other pupils, destroying school property
A4	B	Cypriot		Behavioural disorder	Attention-seeking that sometimes turns into challenging behaviour-
A5	B	Roma			Emotional difficulties, immature social skills
A6	B	Roma	✓		Attendance issues, challenging behaviour
A7	B	Roma/ Kurdish	✓		Challenging behaviour
A8	B	Cypriot			Behavioural difficulties, attention and concentration problems, disruptive ⁽³⁾
A9	B	Roma	✓		Hyperkinetic, lacks concentration, challenging behaviour, disruptive
A10	B	Roma	✓		Attendance problems, challenging behaviour
B1	B	African			Challenging behaviour
B2	B	Cypriot			Picks fights in and out of the class, uses strong language, aggressive, disruptive, refuses to work with other pupils– family problems-violence
B3	B	Cypriot		Learning Difficulties	Hyperactive, attention-seeking, does not follow any instruction
B4	B	Cypriot			Attention issues, disruptive, aggressive, serious emotional difficulties arising from family problems
B5	B	Romanian	✓		Disruptive, immature social skills, causes dangerous situations
B6	B	Cypriot		Learning difficulties	Disruptive, aggressive behaviour, attention problems and does not work in the classroom at all unless teacher works with him- family problems

Notes:

- (1) **Attendance issues** includes not attending school for long periods, extending up to a month, or frequently absent and not regular attendees – that is, coming for three days, then not for another two or three days.
- (2) **Challenging behaviour** includes arriving late at school or to a lesson, not engaging in tasks and refusing to collaborate, bullying other children, picking a fight while in class, confronting teachers, not following classroom rules, verbally or physically abusive. Occasionally challenging behaviour was associated with violent behaviour (throwing chairs, destroying things in classroom).
- (3) **Disruptive behaviour** includes wandering around in the classroom, distracting other pupils.

Given that the subject schools are part of the ZEP programme, it was decided that more detailed information regarding the pupils should be sought. For this reason, during informal conversations, the headteachers were asked to provide information about their schools (see Appendix 9). The information provided about the schools is summarised below, while the information about the pupils is presented in Chart 1:

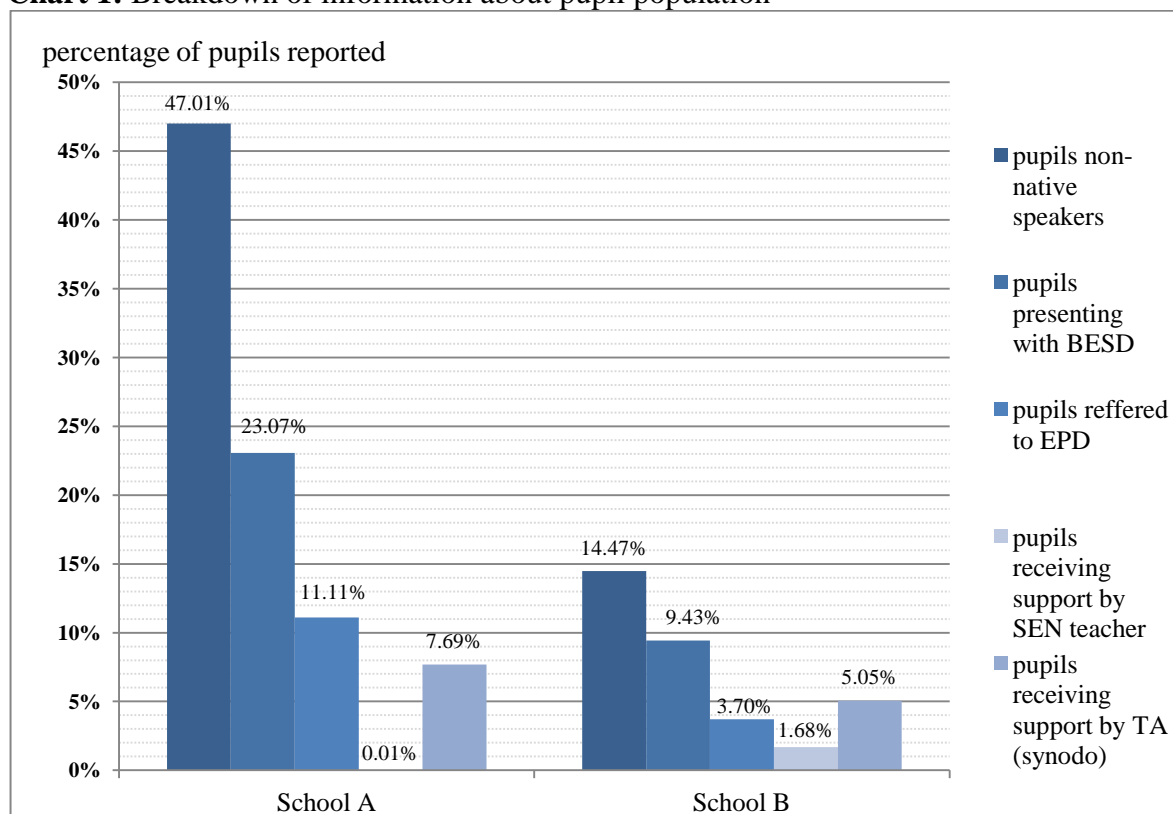
- School A has 117 pupils, with an average of 14 per class
- School B has 297 pupils – 142 in grades A–Γ(KA) and 155 in grades Δ–Στ (KB) – with an average of 17 per class
- School A has 11 families receiving support from the SWS and School B 26 families
- School A has 9 pupils receiving support by an SEN teacher, while school B has 15 pupils receiving such support.
- School A has one pupil who receive one-to-one support by a TA, School B has 5 pupils who do or are otherwise assisted by a TA.

It was also reported that 11 families in School A and 26 families in School B were receiving support from the SWS during the school year 2008-2009 and the beginning of the school year 2009-2010. The data provided by all three headteachers were based on the annual reports the schools submit to the MOEC. However, it was not possible this data to be verified by the SWS. In other words it was not possible to verify the actual number of families receiving support, the nature of support they receive (whether financial or of any other form), whether pupils presented with BESD are coming from those families, as well as whether there are any common family characteristics of those pupils reported as presenting behaviour difficulties. As it was also reported, however, the support is provided either daily

or weekly and depends on the extent of the financial or other problems they are having (these would include the parents having alcohol- or drug-related problems, engaging in domestic violence, problems with the police, one of both of them being unemployed, a lack of basic necessities at home, such as a water supply, electricity, food and, perhaps, beds in which to sleep). It was also stated that the families of Roma pupils were living in poverty conditions and were receiving financial support by the SWS. Many of the parents of Roma pupils were also unemployed.

Chart 1, shows information reported concerning the registered pupils in both schools

Chart 1: Breakdown of information about pupil population



The information presented in Chart 1, represents data which was provided by the three headteachers of the two schools. The chart shows the numbers pupils who are non-native

speakers, pupils who are considered by the schools as presenting with BESD, pupils who are receiving support by a TA (synodo), and those pupils receiving support by an SEN teacher. It can be seen that both schools have a significant number of pupils who are not native speakers. For example 55 registered pupils in School A are non-native speakers which is almost half of the school population (estimated 47.01%) while in School B 43 pupils are non-native speakers (14.47%). The number of pupils who are non-native speakers is considerably higher (in relation to the population of the school) in School A than school B. As reported, also, the vast majority of non native speakers in School A are Roma while in School B pupils have various ethnic backgrounds. Also, according to the data School A presents with higher percentage of pupils presenting with BESD (23.07%) than School B (9.43%) compared to the overall population of each school. Concerning this, the headteachers also reported that from the cases they considered to present with BESD during the year 2009 (September 2008 to September 2009) 27 in School A and 28 in School B have been referred to the EPD for further evaluation of their difficulties. It was not clear also from the data provided how many of those cases referred to the EPD had been assessed by the District Committee and how many of them are still waiting for response from the EPD.

4.2 The pupils with BESD and their family backgrounds

4.2.1 School A

School A is a small primary school and, at the time of the study, had 117 pupils and a staff of 15. It is located in an area that, before 1974, was resided in mainly by Cypriots. Following the 1974 Turkish occupation and the partition of Cyprus, however, many people

were displaced and spread to different areas, either in the Greek Cypriot government-controlled part of the island or the occupied areas. Due to this, the population in many areas, including where the school is located, changed.

There is social and cultural diversity and it is an underdeveloped area compared to other parts of the city – that is, there is a high concentration of immigrants and people living in poverty.

The school building is old, simple and not an appealing structure. The walls of the school have been painted and show some of the pupils' work, but the environment does not look very welcoming.

On my first appointed visit, the headteacher and I talked about the research and how the school would be involved. The headteacher talked about the school, the school population, why the school is different from other schools in the area, the reasons for the school joining the ZEP programme and many of the issues that the school and its staff come across.

The background of many of the registered pupils in the school is Roma. At a later stage, once all the interviews and observation sessions had been completed, it was found that 8 out of 10 pupils pointed by the teachers to presenting with BESD are Roma. This raised the question, is this the case because the teachers have difficulties working with these pupils as there is a language barrier or is it the result of general prejudice? The interviews and observation sessions answered this question – these pupils do indeed show signs of BESD.

In talking about the pupils at the school, the EP (n) talked about the current political situation in Cyprus and gave it as one reason for the authorities not being able to gain

information about the precise numbers of the Roma population. As the EP explained, since the Cyprus Constitution of 1960, the majority of Roma considered themselves to be part of the Turkish community, so, following the 1974 occupation, they moved from the southern to the northern part of Cyprus.

According to the EP, the Roma have lived in Cyprus for many decades mostly having a nomadic lifestyle. This however changed since 1974. Since then they live in different areas across Cyprus. According to the headteacher of the school (t) and to a teacher (mm), the area is considered by the authorities as declined and dangerous, with very old and unsafe buildings. Yet, plenty of people, including Greek Cypriots, Turkish Cypriots and Roma, live in this area, in houses that lack the essentials for living, such as electricity, a water supply and enough space for all the family to live in. Also it is often the case that many members of the same family live together under the same roof, which in some cases, according to the headteacher (t), may consist of only one room.

It was also reported that most of the Roma who live in the area are unemployed, face prejudice and are socially marginalised, which extends to the education of the children or else the Roma parents themselves have a negative attitude towards education.

The following were reported concerning the living conditions and problems experienced by the Roma families and other families of pupils in the school:

we have pupils who sleep on the floor and their mum is making her living from prostitution ... (t)

you can see in their faces the problems of their families, when you have in your class pupils coming hungry because they haven't eaten

there are cases of pupils and one of their parents is in prison or involved in drugs. We even have a child whose mother is a drug user ... and those who live in houses that lack the essentials to live, such as electricity, water ... lots of problems and lots of different cases of pupils. (ss)

Some of these pupils are growing up in a very problematic family environment... they experience violence in their family and most of the families live in poverty. Some of the parents do not work and often this has to do with the lifestyle and habits of the Roma. [...] Not only Roma ... The Cypriots living in the area face many problems: drugs, gambling and prostitution. (pp)

Family problems were not the only difficulties discussed by the headteacher and other participants when talking about pupils with BESD. It became clear that BESD in this school was associated with the Roma.

It is noteworthy that, in describing the overall picture of the Roma pupils in the school, the teachers repeatedly said that their attainment is rather poor and a key contributing factor is their parents' own poor educational background. Most of the participants associated the attainment of pupils with the survival issues of the families. In addition it was stressed on many occasions that parents are not interested about the education of their children. Despite primary education being compulsory and free for all individuals living in Cyprus, the headteacher (t) stated that many pupils do not attend regularly and, in some cases, they have a specific pattern of attendance – some move with their families from southern to northern Cyprus- or education is not part of their or future plans. It was also reported that there are cases of pupils in School A (Roma) which they started school at the age of 10:

When I first came to this school, ... I would never have imagined that a pupil older than 10 would never have attended school before. Imagine a child of ten years old beginning school for the first time. (t)

We managed first to bring the pupils from the street to the school yard and then to the class and this is very important. (pp)

There was also the case of the girl in observation A1 whose attendance was rather poor (see Table 9) . The teacher described how she would not attend school for periods of time, sometimes for up to a month. The teacher (pp) thought that this resulted from her parents' lack of interest in the education of their daughter, as well as the fact that the family was moving constantly from the south to the north of Cyprus. As a result, the girl was almost 'functionally illiterate' in the final year of primary school:

She could do better at school, but she is not coming to school regularly – her constant absences might extend up to a month. I think the family has relatives in the occupied part of Cyprus, in the north, and they go there and stay ... She has language difficulties and she is generally withdrawn and does not form relationships with her peers, but she could catch up if she were to come regularly. Her family does not bother. She will finish primary school soon, what will she do? Perhaps she will drop school. (pp)

4.2.2 School B

School B had a larger number of pupils than School A (297 pupils) and, consequently, more members of staff (20 teachers, headteachers and other members of staff). The school is located within two square miles of School A in an old building. Due to its size, it has two headteachers (one for grades Α'- Γ' (KA) and one for grades Δ'- Στ' (KB). As it was reported during my first meeting with them, the school has a long history – it is one of the oldest schools in the city. It joined the ZEP schools programme because, like School A, it is located in an area of the city where many people come from the lower socio-economic strata.

School B is divided into three major buildings:

- one for reception year pupils
- one for pupils aged 6–9, named KA (see Chapter 2, Figure 2), for Grades A, B and Γ
- one for pupils aged 10–12, named KB, for Grades Δ, E and Στ.

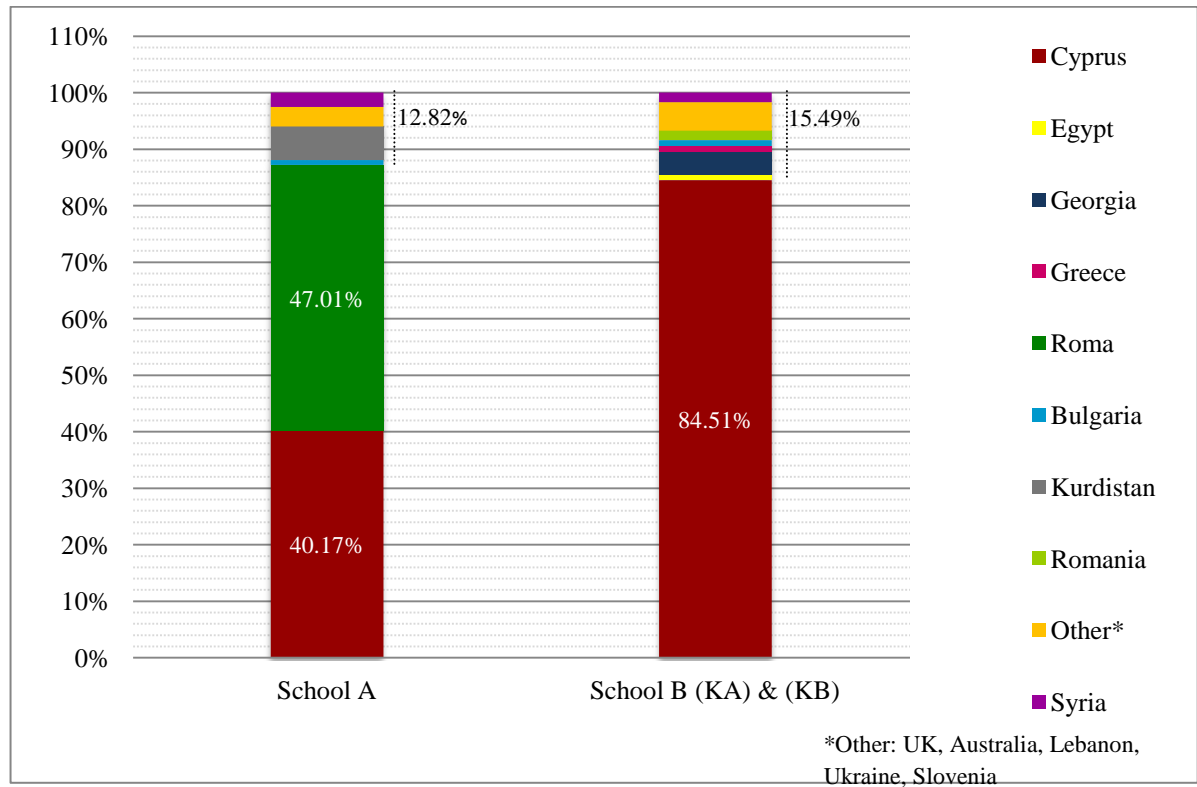
Both KA and KB work closely together, have the same policies and, in some cases, organise shared events, although they have different management teams.

Although the buildings are old, especially KB, the environment is very welcoming and there is a lounge area in one of the buildings. The interior of the main entrance to the KB building and the outside are covered with the pupils' work, which creates a motivating and welcoming impression. There were pupils' drawings, parts of the garden had been created by different age groups and a workspace in the main entrance has been assigned to the different grades. There I met the headteacher (k) and we walked to the KA building, where we met the second headteacher (bb). That building is also old, but the front yard had a colourful printed floor depicting a city with its streets, roundabouts, traffic lights and houses.

School B's pupil population differs from that of School A as the majority attending are Cypriot and have parents who speak Greek fluently. A significant percentage of pupils in School A, however, come from various ethnic and cultural backgrounds, with many of them being Roma. Chart 2 shows the nationalities of the pupils attending the two schools and, clearly, the majority of pupils attending School B are Cypriot (84.51 per cent), while in School A are Roma (47.01 per cent). Additionally, 12.82 per cent of pupils attending School

A and 15.49 per cent of pupils attending School B come from diverse ethnic backgrounds (see Appendix 14).

Chart 2: The nationalities of pupils in Schools A and B



People residing in the area around School B, although not Roma, also live in poverty and face various other problems that, according to the two headteachers, have an impact on the behaviour and emotional state of those pupils identified as presenting with BESD.

Approximately 26 families, mostly Cypriot, are supported by the SWS (15 in KA and 11 in KB).

Those who participated in the research said that family difficulties are interwoven with the behavioural difficulties pupils present with at school:

we have many cases of families who come from the lower socio-economical strata, parents with psychological problems, mixed marriages, broken families. (bb)

I believe some of the students attending this school come from very problematic family backgrounds. You cannot imagine how bad sometimes this is ... many of the problems with behaviour are associated with many family problems. ... Violence between the parents, separation.... divorce that did not end the best way and parents , parents' negligence, pupils lack support from their families. (cc)

here ... we have pupils who are immigrants... pupils coming from divorced families or single parent families and violence. (dd)

We have families that are financially supported or who are closely monitored by the SWS. (mm)

An example of a pupil with continuous behavioural difficulties was P. The child had a problematic background. His dad would beat his mother very badly or would fight overnight and the next morning I had to deal with the child's distress over what happened. (u)

4.3. Understanding of the term BESD based on cases in the two subject schools

During the interviews, the participants were asked to express what they understood by the term 'Behavioural Emotional and Social Difficulties' and provide examples of or relate incidences of the behavioural difficulties pupils have shown.

The participants frequently quoted characteristics such as not engaging with lesson activities, being violent and immature, physically or verbally abusive towards peers and teachers or being disruptive, seeking attention and being hyperactive. Teachers frequently reported learning and language difficulties (9 out of 16 pupils- see Table 9) as being associated with behavioural difficulties.

These descriptions and examples were gathered together and refined and, with the contributing factors also reported by the participants, were set out in Table 10.

Table 10: Reported characteristics

Numbers of participants citing	Characteristics
9	Challenging behaviour (as described in Table 8)
5	Work avoidance Failing or refusing to comply with classroom tasks or rules or work with peers
4	Negative or apathetic Withdrawn, temper tantrums, signs of depression
3	Disruptive Attention-seeking behaviour, interfering with the work of other pupils, talking excessively loudly during lessons
2	Hyperactive
1	Immature behaviour Climbing on to the balcony and threatening to fall, biting
Numbers of participants citing	Contributing factors
(School A = 4) (School B = 10) 14	Family and cultural background Divorce, unemployment and poverty, violence between parents, addiction to drugs, a parent in prison, family's lifestyle, neglecting the child, horrible living conditions
(School A = 4) (School B = 1) 5	Language Greek not mother tongue
(School A = 4) (School B = 1) 5	Learning difficulties
(School A = 3) (School B = 2) 5	Medical/genetic factors Schizophrenia, autism, ADHD
(School B) 2	School environment Lack of resources, personnel with positive attitudes, not trained to work with pupils with BESD, negative

School A's participants used the phrase 'challenging behaviour' most to describe what they perceived BESD to be. According to the participants (o, pp, mm, n qq), many of the pupils who are referred to the EPD and those who have already been assessed show challenging behaviour persistently, which sometimes can be violent – destroying things in the classroom or school, fighting with peers in and outside the classroom, having a bad temper, threatening to harm themselves, using strong language in their communication with peers and so on.

The second most-mentioned characteristic was ‘work avoidance’. Examples given were refusing to work with other pupils on tasks and preferring to be seated alone and do whatever pleases them during lessons or repeatedly causing trouble during lessons if they were asked to work on things they do not like.

Together with describing their understanding of BESD, participants expressed their views as to which factors they thought contributed to these difficulties (see Table 10). They commonly suggested a stressful family environment, such as problematic family relationships and physical abuse (violence between parents or parents being violent towards their children), parents being drug or alcohol addicts, more than one family cohabitating under the same roof, poverty, poor living conditions and so on. Here is a selection of the statements they made on this subject:

Sometimes this child comes to school upset either because his dad came home drunk and beat him without a reason or he witnessed a fight between his parents ...his parents argue a lot and its bad... it is impossible for these problems not to affect him emotionally.. I can see this very often... (o)

when he bites you or climbs up on the balcony fence threatening to fall from there if he does not have what he wants or when he grabs the chair and throws it, it becomes apparent that this child has behavioural problems. (rr)

these two pupils do not respond to lesson requirements and do not engage in classroom activities. They continuously wander around during lessons, distracting other pupils and do whatever pleases them. Once one of them.. wanted to go out and although I said no... he left and came after the break time... imagine they are only 11 years old. (u)

Participants from School B often spoke about persistent non-compliant, aggressive and violent behaviour or emotional difficulties, such as being withdrawn or not establishing relationships with peers. When discussing contributing factors to this, the participants, like

those in School A, overstressed family problems due to divorce or unemployment or the fact that many parents are immigrants, working excessively, and so do not have much to do with the raising of their children. The headteacher (b) in School B mentioned the case of a girl who would constantly come to school wearing dirty clothes, had head lice and was often bullied. She never showed confidence in lessons, rarely wanted to contribute in the classroom and rarely talked to her teacher in front of other pupils. She received one-to-one support from an EP as she was presenting with signs of depression.

Participants in School B expressed the view that, for some children, the school is their gateway to being able to escape from their problems, a place where they can feel welcomed and safe. The following comments are illustrative of these teachers' understandings of the pupils' behaviour and some of the causes they believe lie behind the behavioural difficulties they present with:

This Friday I was called to intervene in two incidents. ... One of them concerned a boy who did not return to the class after breaktime. We looked for him everywhere and for two hours we did not know where he was. Eventually we found him hiding. This happened after having fought with another boy ... This pupil comes from a very problematic family, as do many of the pupils with behavioural difficulties in this school. This child was scared we might have called home... his dad... and he is afraid of him... (bb)

There is a case of two children whose parents are violent ... the police are involved in their case ... and I think it's a drugs issue ... The SWS took over the care of the children and the children go home only in the evening, while, after school, they stay at a children's home. There, the personnel have responsibility for their care and safety. They make sure that the children are fed, do their homework and enjoy activities. One of the two said once that she does not want to go home... (mm)

In contrast to what has presented so far, one teacher said (aa), having pupils who do not behave well, avoid work, and do challenge their teachers systematically with their

challenging behaviour, is a sign of the failure of the school system to either work effectively with them or provide them with the encouragement they need to learn. The same teacher added, if the school staff and especially teachers lack the awareness and understanding that is needed when working with these pupils, then little progress can be seen. The teacher also talked about the importance of the attitudes of school staff:

it's a combination of factors ... sometimes these range from inherited, environmental to family or school-related. This school in particular, ... I think a well-resourced with experienced and well-trained and positive teachers working together, an environment that celebrates diversity, is likely to diminish behavioural problems ... not only this.... i think when concerted effort is invested in improving the environment of the school –there is going to be a change ... the way the school system has developed does not help much and many difficulties presented. (aa)

Another teacher reported that:

our school suffers from behavioural problems of pupils ... but I think there is also too much negativity on the part of parents and teachers in some cases ... like in my case, when I was appointed to come to this school, I just did not want to ... I heard many stories about the area, the pupils ... this has changed now. (qq)

One of the least common factors that participants highlighted in relation to BESD was medical or other conditions, such as autism.

4.4 Elements of good practice

From the early stages of interviews, participants were asked to talk about their understanding of the notion of good practice. Establishing their understanding of this notion would help to develop the conversation on and discuss the different aspects of good practice. Asking these participants directly about their understanding of good practice and

BESD, however, it was interesting, as different perspectives were reported which they reflected different experiences and professional roles.

The EP (n) described good practice as the outcome of collective procedures and actions, from different stakeholders in the schools, in departments of the MOEC and individual practitioners working with pupils, and said that it begins in the early stages of identifying the problem and continues with securing a decision concerning the provision of support and establishing clear individual learning plans (ILPs) for the pupils based on their strengths and weaknesses. These plans, the EP said, need to be the outcome of collaborative work between the school and professionals in the district committee who are assessing the individual cases as well as the parents of pupils presenting with BESD. The EP pointed out that, working with the schools is essential for the school, staff and the families. Moreover it was pointed out that the expertise of an EP is valuable in establishing an understanding of the nature of the pupils' difficulties and needs and further commented:

where children are happy and thrive regardless of their individual weaknesses, then we can claim that our work is effective. Schools must be ready to provide the learning or emotional support pupils need. They cannot do this alone how... all we need is to work as a team...(n)

The headteacher of School A (t) places value instead on providing pupils with the best opportunities for learning. Their views align, however, in valuing the shared work that is done by the professionals and the school. As the headteacher (t) said:

good practice is when the collective work between specialised people and teachers results in providing children with the best opportunities to learn, to develop their skills.. In many respects good practice is the outcome of many factors working together. ...I think being attentive to the pupil's needs and seeking support when

needed ... and with providing the opportunities for pupils to mature emotionally, develop their personalities.

The ways in which the teachers understood good practice differed from this in that they considered the happiness and motivation of pupils at school to be the results of good practice. They associated good practice with a positive school ethos; a place where children feel 'happy'. They also expressed the view that good practice means having policies in place and a curriculum celebrating the individuality and diversity of children, classrooms with not too many pupils in them and teachers who are attentive to their strengths and weaknesses, as well as working together with their fellow colleagues in the school and other professionals on approaches that will enable pupils to reach their full potential:

for me, good practice means working effectively with them and seeing them responding in lessons... When pupils leave the classroom and are happy and they have achieved something, even the smallest, that means my work hit home. Also, I think working with pupils with BESD requires careful planning and organisation, but a teacher alone cannot do much ... (qq)

I feel that for some of the pupils, and this boy in particular, their behaviour is just the tip of the iceberg ... That is why the focus should be placed on understanding the difficulties some pupils are undergoing ... the nature of their needs and then focus on making their learning a motivating experience. (g)

They all, but especially the teachers, talked about creating an environment in which pupils do not feel suppressed, but, instead, understood and valued; where they are given the space and opportunities to develop through their learning experiences.

The views of the teachers quoted below relating to the role played by the curriculum add to the above list. The first teacher expresses the view that delivering an increasingly demanding curriculum turns teaching and learning into a struggle, so suggests a reappraisal and changing to one that values personal traits and promotes self-esteem:

Maybe a curriculum that values individual traits and does not add pressure to the teacher ...now with the Educational Reform in process we expect changes... I believe the effort of the authorities is to change the existing national curriculum...and they need to change it because so far ... it feels like we are on a race every year ...we do not have time to do much, especially with these children... (aa)

The next teacher talks about how bureaucracy prevents the necessary support from reaching pupils at the right time, despite teachers doing their best when working with pupils:

in this school we put our heart into our work, we look beyond the labels that are put on children... they say the pupils in this school are Roma and this and that ... but we need to..... and we do look beyond the needs, we look at the child as an individual, but sometimes we feel this is just not enough ... getting professional support at school, working with pupils who present with behaviour difficulties or developing policies all stop at one thing: the bureaucracy...(vv)

4.4.1 Securing the provision of support for pupils with BESD: the assessment procedure

It can be seen from previous chapters and the discussion so far that what constitutes good practice when working with pupils with BESD is a rather complex issue. This section focuses on the provision of additional support in relation to this and the procedure in place for requesting that an assessment be made as the first step in individual cases. Much information was gathered on this area from descriptions provided during interviews with an EP, a SEN teacher, the three headteachers and the class teachers.

When it comes to pupils with any SEN, there is a certain procedure that is followed by the school, the ‘detection and evaluation of the needs of children with SEN’ procedure (MOEC, 1999), as set out in the 113(I)/1999 law. According to the participants, the schools follow the guidelines of the 113 (I)/ 1999 law when they suspect that a pupil presents with BESD –

as they do with any child suspected with SEN. According to this law, once a pupil is suspected with SEN teachers complete a form referring the pupil to the EPD (see Appendix 13: Policy 4(2)-Referral of child to the ‘District Committee of Special Education’), providing detailed information concerning the personal and academic development needs and outlining the steps being taken to track the progress of the pupil. Before this step is taken, teachers discuss the case in a staff meeting. Teachers are also entitled to provide information about the pupils and their families, describe the problems they are having and portray what the pupils are like in class, but, most importantly, include information about different aspects of their development – their cognitive, social and emotional, speech and language development, as well as their motor skills (Appendix 13).

The assessment procedure takes time to complete. In the meantime, action is taken at school level, from the time that official referral has been filed. A district committee, which is responsible for assessing individual cases of pupils suspected with SEN, decides whether or a case needs be assessed further. This committee consists of the First Education Officer in the Ministry, an SEN teacher, EP, clinical psychologist, SWS officer, speech therapist and the pupil’s teacher. The committee assesses the case following the guidelines of the 113(I) law and decides whether or not a local multidisciplinary committee should be set up to assess each pupil’s needs. Each specialist in the committee can conduct an assessment individually and, if there is professional agreement on the nature of a pupil’s needs, a statement of those needs is given. Following this, all the information is brought together to form an ‘Individual Learning Plan’ (ILP). ILPs are documents that contain overviews of pupils’ strengths and weaknesses, learning and behaviour targets, as well as updates concerning progress. Copies of ILPs are kept in the pupils’ schools as well as by the EPD

and are used by the multidisciplinary committee, which reviews the cases and the support provided annually.

A wealth of descriptions were gathered during the interviews about the application of the assessment procedure. The raw data was refined and grouped and Figure 5 was developed in order to give a picture of the different stages, the people involved in each stage and the time taken to be completed so as an ILP is developed. The results are shown in Figure 5.

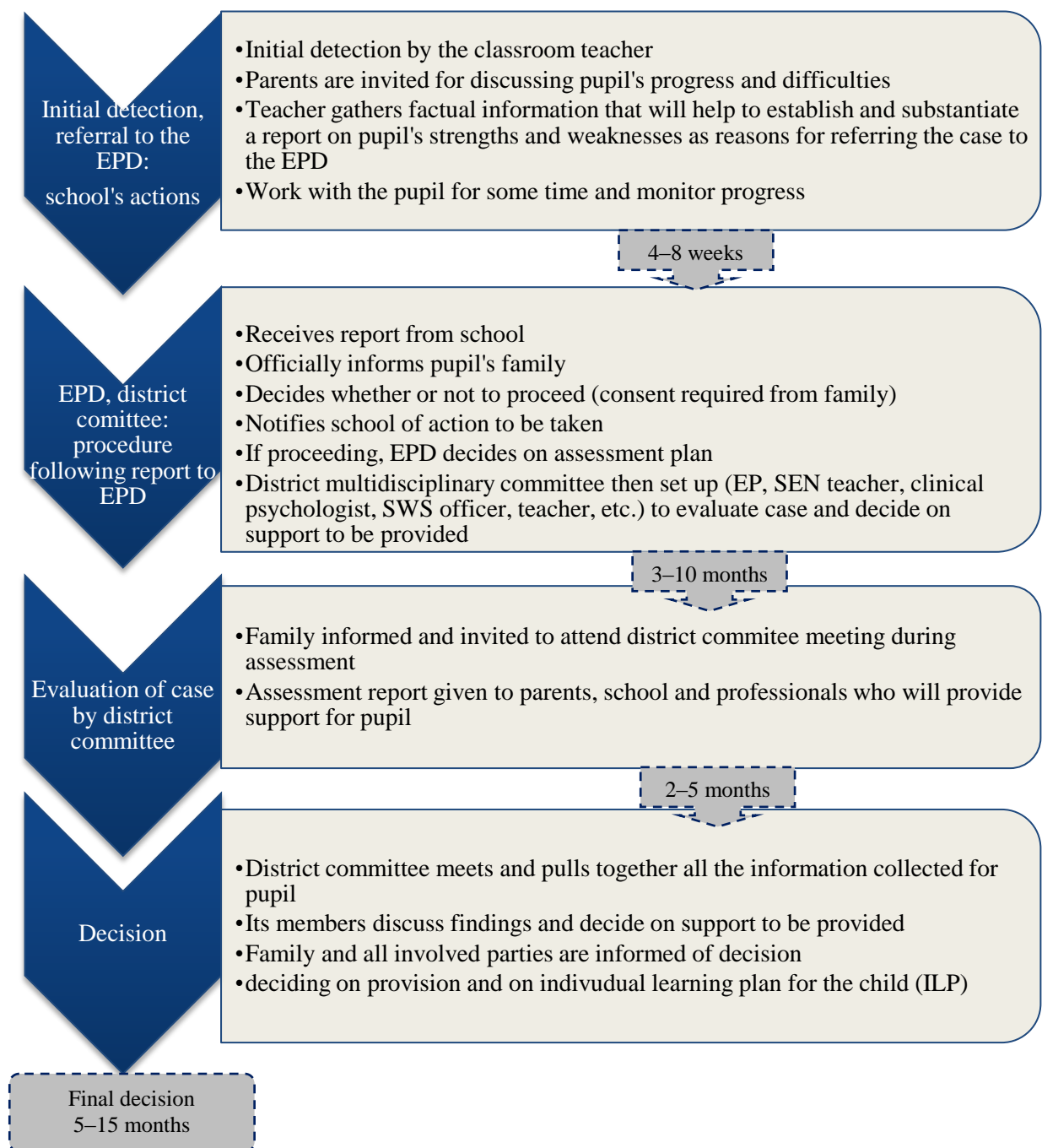


Figure 5: The assessment procedure

4.4.1.1 Views on this procedure

In describing how the assessment procedure is carried out, the majority of the participants in the study also gave their views on it. Participants' views could be summarised to the following:

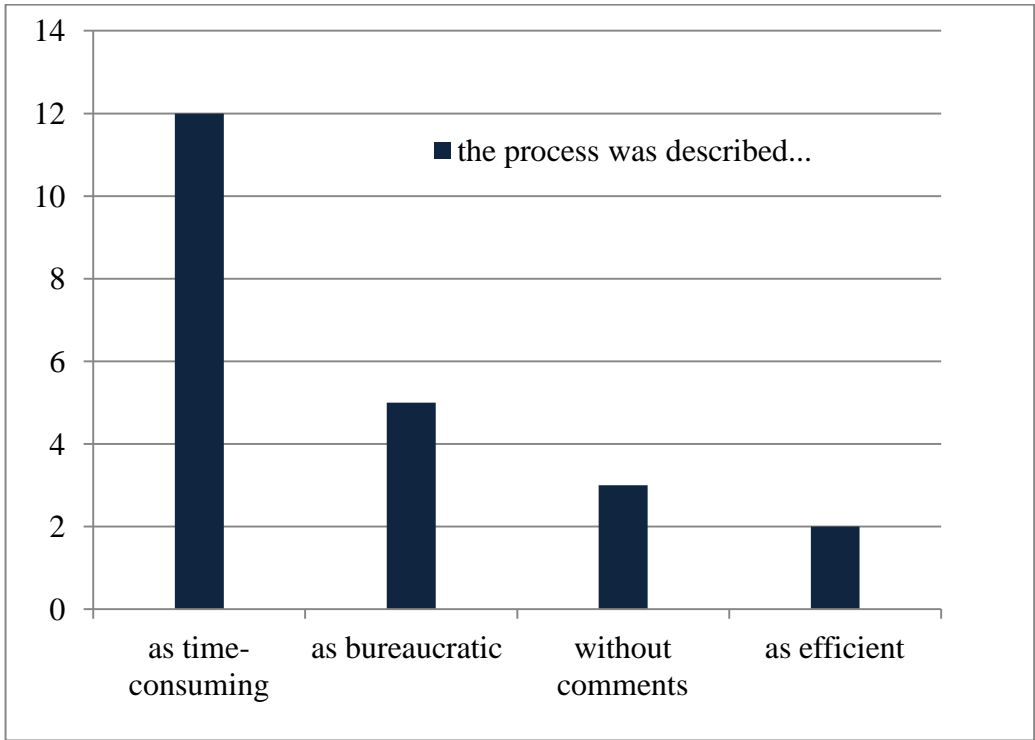
- time required to complete
- specific guidelines (which cases can be referred to the EPD)
- teachers concerns in terms of school and classroom practice

As Figure 5 (in the previous section), shows, the time it takes for the process to be completed and an ILP set up is between 5 and 15 months. During this time, teachers mostly work with the pupils concerned as they would with any other pupil in the classroom. The SEN teacher (g) talked about this issue and stated that some cases, such as those with an apparent physical or mental disability, are processed faster than those deemed to present BESD. This happens because, difficulties displayed by some pupils are considered as 'naughtiness'(g) or 'attention-seeking' and this is why these pupils receive a slow response from the EPD in acknowledging their difficulties and learning needs. As the SEN teacher added, teachers in such cases do the best they can for the pupils, but their difficulties are more complex than simply exhibiting attention-seeking behaviour or naughtiness and, very often, they are sent to an SEN unit to work with an SEN teacher or SEN TA. A teacher in School B (aa) admitted that, on many occasions the boy in her class (pointed out as presenting with BESD) was sent to the SEN unit because his behaviour was too challenging to deal with in the classroom:

sometimes I am not sure how to deal with his behaviour ... I have talked about this situation in the staff meetings several times, but the situation is like this because we are still waiting for a response from the EPD. It's just that it takes too long for any case to receive some professional attention and also there are not specific guidelines concerning support. The boy has been diagnosed with learning difficulties but his behaviour is still to be assessed.(aa)

Studying the concerns raised, together with the fact that most participants in the observation sessions suggested pupils to observe, identifying them as having BESD even though they had not yet been granted official statements to that effect, it could safely be concluded that the process is unduly drawn out. The concerns have been grouped into the four categories illustrated in Chart 3. While some of the participants thought that the process was efficient or did not comment on it, the majority thought it was a time-consuming and bureaucratic procedure.

Chart 3: Participants’ views on the assessment procedure



Most commonly, teachers talked about the system failing to see cases of pupils with BESD soon enough – that is, within a few months of them having referred them for assessment (12 participants). Also teachers talked about the need for having specific guidelines about which cases could be reported and then what form of support is provided during the procedure for assessment is in process. They seemed to understand that the EPD and district committee have heavy workloads, but stressed their disappointment with how time-consuming it is, taking up to a year to complete:

I have contacted the EP and referred a pupil for assessment and I am still waiting, since last October and now its April ... Basically, I am still waiting for an EP to read the report and visit the school. (rr)

there is a delay and perhaps half or more of the school year is wasted ... sometimes even a year... without professional guidelines for support and with clear understanding of the nature of the difficulties it seems very difficult to work with these pupils. (aa)

The procedure is really slow and this results in wasting precious time ... with unpleasant results ... and this because the system is too bureaucratic. (dd)

The problem with this committee is that they process the assessments at a snail's pace. As soon as I noticed the difficulties I talked about it in a staff meeting and then completed the form, providing all the details ... the teacher who had this class last year did the same, but yet we receive no response ... I will be lucky if the case is examined within the year. (ss)

I mean, it could be carried out in a more scientific way. It depends on what the teacher says and it takes months for a case to be processed and too long before an ILP for the pupil is set up ... the bureaucracy is unacceptable. (pp)

4.4.2 People: teachers, associated professionals and families

4.4.2.1 Relevant training

As noted previously, the subject schools, due to their location and the nature of their pupil populations, joined the ZEP schools programme and operate under the Priority Education Policy. As the teachers and other members of staff undertake a role which is different from any other mainstream school, it would be easy to assume that they have received teacher training and been on development courses to enhance their knowledge and skills in order to facilitate their work in these schools and with pupils who present with BESD, especially as the schools have pupils presenting with behaviour-related difficulties. As the ZEP coordinator (u) said, working in ZEP schools is a ‘challenge’ and teachers have to deal, on daily basis, with many different issues, including behaviour.

Despite the assumption above being logical, the evidence from this study suggests that the teachers lacked confidence about working with pupils with BESD. Also, 19 out of the 22 interview participants reported that they had had no training in working with pupils with BESD. In particular, the teachers, although qualified, had received no such training, while only three reported having undertaken training in this area during their university studies or on in-service training courses provided by the Pedagogical Institute. Indeed, overall, the interview responses showed that the teachers had received inadequate training and, thus, had a lack of theoretical and technical knowledge relating to working with pupils with BESD.

As the extracts from the interviews below show, despite the need for teachers working in ZEP schools to be adequately trained and keen to work in them, the reality is different. The teachers had been appointed to work in the two subject schools without much experience

and without having undertaken training relevant to working in ZEP schools. One of the teachers (i) said that a lack of relevant training and experience becomes a ‘weakness’ when working in this type of school. Such training, the same teacher commented, enables teachers to address the challenges that come with working in this type of school, including working with pupils with BESD. Similar comments were reported by other participants in the study:

I was surprised that I was appointed to work in this school, since I have neither training in working with these pupils, nor have I requested to be appointed to work in a ZEP school. Basically, I got promoted to headteacher and I was transferred here. When I got promoted, three schools needed headteachers and all of them were ZEP schools and I had to choose between the three. This was the one with the fewest problems, so I chose it... A great mistake of the MOEC and the ESC, is that they appoint teachers to work in these schools who will not present objections, such as those with the fewest promotion credits or those being promoted ... The ESC does not send specialised or trained staff or even people who would like to work in these schools. (b)

I have experience working with pupils with behavioural difficulties gained from working in this school, but no experience through my studies or courses. (rr)

Basically, from my experience of undertaking a couple of training courses, after being promoted and appointed to this school. The training I had was relating to management and in working with Roma pupils, but not pupils with BESD. (t)

I had undertaken some modules for my degree about problematic behaviour, but, no, ...although I believe it would be very essential for working with these pupils.... no.. I do not have any related training... (cc)

The evidence from the interviews suggests that the provision of training courses for the professional development of teachers and other staff working in these schools is important for improving teaching and learning practices and for providing the best practice when working with pupils who present with BESD. Such courses can have a great impact, in terms of expanding their knowledge, understanding and proficiency. In organising them,

emphasis should be placed on the local professional development needs of those working in the schools. Such training has not been provided, apart from an obligatory course in 2007. This was set up for those working in ZEP schools, but the teachers made the following comments about it:

I cannot say that it was helpful ... We need substantially more practical training. For example, we come across certain difficulties and we are often in situations where we do not know how to act ... we need practical solutions ... How am I supposed to act if the child has a tantrum ... or if he threatens to harm himself, what should I do, how do I react, when the child continuously does not collaborate or is aggressive or rude ... ? How can we work better with pupils who display so many emotional problems, who come from broken families and those who are victims of abuse? ... We had that two-day course last year ... but, to be honest, it was all theory ... personally it did not help me at all and neither did I learn anything new. (qq)

The course was very interesting, but did not address any of the everyday issues I come across in working with pupils who present with behavioural difficulties and had nothing to do with ZEP schools. (ee)

We need training that is shaped by our needs in working in this school, which will expand our understanding of behaviour difficulties, of Roma... (mm)

Training is essential ... but you cannot just attend *any* training course ... teachers working in this school come across specific problems and work with pupils who are difficult to work with ... Every day is a challenge, but we are not prepared for this challenge. (ii)

4.4.2.2 Establishing support partnerships

The participants in the study reported that a key aspect of good practice when working with pupils with BESD is the school establishing support partnerships with key professionals whose expertise is valuable in addressing their needs. It was noted that when more experts are involved and work alongside the teachers and other staff, better outcomes are achieved.

That is because schools do not have to deal with just simple misbehaviour or naughtiness – the problems are more complex. The teachers, especially, considered it important to establish partnerships with professionals from different disciplines because:

these professionals, like, for example, the EP or clinical psychologist, ... they are specialised in what they do and have the knowledge and training that we lack ... and which we need when working with pupils in this school ... they are experts in what they do and working together with them is important for these pupils. An EP is trained to understand what is behind a tantrum, aggression or depression of a pupil the way I cannot ... Working with them enables us to work with the child the best way we can. (rr)

The participants not only mentioned the *expected* key associated professionals but also the benefits of working together with a variety of other people. The members of staff of the two subject schools work in partnership with professionals from different disciplines and organisations – the following being those most commonly reported:

- EPD
- SEN Department-TAs and SEN TAs
- SWS
- interpreters
- a local children's home
- health services officers
- police
- local Greek Orthodox diocese
- local athletics clubs, Cyprus Athletics Organisation
- charity organisations.

The participants were then asked to express their views on their work with the key professionals they identified (the EP, SEN teachers, SWS) and whether or not they thought

they generally have positive outcomes for them as teachers and their work with the pupils.

Their answers are presented in Table 11.

Table 11: Responses and comments on whether or not partnerships with key professionals and others has positive contribution on their work with pupils presenting with BESD.

Responses	Number of responses	Comments
Yes	9	<p>‘Much of what the school has accomplished, is because of this support we get’ (t)</p> <p>‘Some local bodies and departments of the MOEC, have come to support. ... they support in any way they can’ (mm)</p> <p>‘This school is among the few schools, as far as I am aware, that different disciplines work directly with. ... For sure, they help, each one of them, to the greatest extent’ (b)</p>
Yes, although needs improvement	8	<p>‘Yes, if there is more substantial coordination and specific objectives, it can be really productive’ (dd)</p> <p>‘It helps ... for me, one problem is taken out of my class ... and I can work with the other pupils ... but it could be improved’ (i)</p> <p>‘She could be at school more often and give more substantial support’ (pp)</p> <p>‘I think these people do what they can but we need to see them more .. in school.. (cc)</p>
No, the partnership is non-existent	5	<p>‘Difficulties, hmmm ... we do not have the support’ (o)</p> <p>‘we all try ... but we want people who will be specialists’ (qq)</p> <p>‘First and crucial issue is for these professionals to come to school’ (rr)</p> <p>‘this partnership does not exist or does not work’ (ss)</p> <p>‘Yes, but we do not have many professionals working ... It is just the SEN teacher’ (jj)</p>

4.4.2.3 Educational Psychology Department (EPD)

The participants reported the EPD as being the department of the MOEC that they most frequently seek to work with and the EPs as the professionals from whom they mostly seek help with the cases of individual pupils. The nature of the service that is offered by the EPD is, as participants stated, the key to providing the appropriate support for pupils with SEN.

Both School A and School B share the same EP and they are working together based on a monthly-basis visits' schedule or on a weekly one. Participants and the EP were asked to talk about the nature of collaboration they maintain with the EP and their perspectives on how this contributes to good practice. The views expressed concerning the quality of the nature of the current collaboration between the schools and EPD, however, were rather contrasting.

The participants first talked about the role of the EPD in the school, which illuminated just how substantial the involvement of this department is in all phases of the education of pupils with BESD, including the detection or identification of the difficulties, assessment of their needs and decisions on the provision of support, as well as setting up an ILP.

All highlighted, too, the expertise that EPs possess and how this can potentially enhance teachers' knowledge and understanding when working with the pupils. For instance, in addition to assessing pupils' needs, the EPs' time in school is dedicated to counselling, providing one-to-one support for pupils and behaviour management consultations for teachers. Moreover, the EPs are key professionals in terms of making decisions regarding what support will be provided for pupils with SEN and making arrangements for progress reviews, as well as working with pupils in cases of family problems.

The interviews illuminated the process for the '*Prevention of and action to prevent violence in the family and in the school*' (SWS, 2009; MOEC, 2006). It was pointed out that a fairly new circular issued by the MOEC (MOEC, 2006) urges primary schools – not just ZEP schools – to have a nominated team consisting of a headteacher/deputy headteacher, teacher and an EP, their role being to identify and deal with incidents of violence and also prevent it

by means of programmes to be developed in the schools. The EP stated, concerning this process:

when we have information or any suspicion about any case of violence or if the child itself trusted someone about being mistreated, we first notify the family adviser and then we work closely with the school and we talk also with the child. At this point we only research about the incident, then the appropriate department of the MOEC will evaluate the case and we set up a programme for support. (n)

Together with highlighting that it is essential to work on a regular basis with EP, participants expressed their concerns about the fact that, due to heavy workloads and duties in other schools, it becomes difficult to reach the EP on a regular basis:

Difficulties, hmmm ... since we do not have the support, neither for emotional difficulties, nor for behaviour ... we rely on the EP ... but how much can she do? How many cases to see and work on, she is only one. We should seek an increase in the time of the EP in this school or of the SEN teacher ... (o)

I think we could have more regular visits by the EP – she comes once in a blue moon and it is not even once a month. She could be at school more often and give more substantial support. The educational authorities need to understand that it is impossible for the services of an EP to be shared between four or five schools... and many cases requiring evaluation in this and other schools... It is difficult to work like this and, as far as this school is concerned, perhaps she is not offering 100 per cent of what she could offer. (pp)

The first and necessary condition is for these professionals to come to school... She only came once when I reported the problems of a particular pupil in my class. I explained in detail his behavioural difficulties, but I did not get any considerable support from her visit ... This child has a serious problem and his case necessitates immediate evaluation ... he has serious psychological and emotional difficulties and needs support from someone who can offer it ... (rr)

All these sound good theoretically and perhaps they have positive outcomes, but, practically, this partnership does not exist or does not work. (ss)

If there was a social worker or EP working on a daily basis in this school, ... then we would have results. (g)

To summarise the participants' comments with regard to the collaboration between EPs and the schools, the following were the most frequently reported problems:

- **time** the amount of time spent by EPs in the two subject schools is insufficient
- **response times** it takes a long time from notification to a case being assessed and for them to respond generally to schools when their advice is sought
- **irregularity** the visits to schools are occasional, but should be made on a regular basis schedule.

The EP, however, pointed out the following:

we are trying to do our best as a department, but also, you know ... in this type of school there is just too much pressure and too many cases to see and too many cases to see also in other schools... On top of this is also the bureaucracy ... and sometimes we have to work not only with pupils but also with parents and teachers and we have to comply with the rules and regulations ... (n)

4.4.2.4 Social Welfare Services (SWS)

Social welfare workers offer extensive support to the pupils and families of both Schools A and B. Sadly, the picture of the family backgrounds of these pupils is rather depressing –as described by participants. Although, geographically, the area around the ZEP flourishes – it is well-developed and prosperous – the particular area of the city where the two schools are located is in social and cultural decline. The people living there are underprivileged and suffer from racism and marginalisation due to their ethnic, cultural and social backgrounds.

A large proportion of the families residing in the area are supported or monitored by the SWS. Its first priorities are the family and children. As discussed in previous sections, in some cases, pupils are removed from their families or need protection but remain with them or else suffer from problems caused by marriages that have ended badly, a parent being prison, drug or alcohol abuse in the family and so on.

The families of these pupils or the pupils are supported by the SWS, which is additionally empowered by legislation (SWS, 2004) to make the necessary arrangements for the protection of the pupils. In some cases, this means that they are placed in a residential home, usually a children's home, if they suffer emotional distress or are victims of domestic violence or there are fears for their safety (SWS, 2004, 2009). The management and teachers of both School A and School B mentioned such cases – for example, pupils attending the two schools who stay in children's homes after school. These pupils may return to their families only to sleep and the next day they go to school.

The system is that, for individual cases of families or pupils who are under the care of SWS, a SWS officer is assigned. The participants generally made positive comments with regard to the support that is provided to the schools by the SWS, but some participants expressed also their concerns.

The SWS officer who works with School A was contacted via the ZEP coordinator with a view to meeting for an interview, but, unfortunately, it was not possible to arrange this. A detailed description was given by the headteacher of School A, however, highlighting the important points about the partnership established between the school and the SWS:

In this school a number of cases of pupils with behavioural difficulties seem to be linked with family problems and we maintain a good relationship with the SWS, ... For instance, when there is a child whose behaviour raises concerns and we suspect problems at home, we deal with the child by also advising the SWS. This happens after our suspicions are cross-checked with the help of the EP. A social welfare officer arranges a visit at the child's home and then reports back to us and informs us about their findings. The involvement of SWS however is not systematic. ...(t)

During the interviews, examples were given of times when the SWS had been called to intervene in the lives of some of the pupils, such as one whose mother was making her living from prostitution and was also involved with drugs, some other pupils whose father was imprisoned for murder, as well as a number of other cases where there were suspicions of domestic violence, negligence and awful living conditions. The SWS's involvement in these cases included granting support to the families and school, if the problems in the family extended to the school, updating the school concerning the families' situations, visiting the pupils' homes with school staff (when pupils reported abuse or were missing from school for days and after trying to contact them by telephone without success) and exchanging information with regard to the support that should be sought for these pupils. The SWS is also entitled to involve the police if needed, but this only occurs in very serious cases.

In both schools, the participants reported that working with the SWS is essential. A concern they expressed, however, was that it is not easy to establish their involvement. Moreover, despite their involvement being crucial, the teachers stated that the families usually do not trust the involvement of SWS officers and is not easy to establish collaboration between the family and these officers –this affects also the information that the school might receive

from the SWS concerning the progress of situation at home. They also added that it is not easy to get in touch with them. The headteachers of School B, reported that:

social services, yes we do work with the local SWS. There is a social welfare officer who is appointed to the school, but we rarely see her and this is only when we call her ... her time in the school is limited. (b)

I think the role of the SWS officers must be clarified by the authorities and there should be a plan for how we work with them (k)

The EP stated that the involvement of the SWS is important and its officers must work closely with schools and on a regular basis especially in the cases where there are suspicions about the wellbeing of the child. The officers' knowledge of the families could be essential for the school and thus the teachers, as receiving updates helps them to work with the pupils in appropriate ways. In the cases where there is good collaboration between SWS officers and the school, the role of these officers is important in raising awareness of the difficulties the child faces at home and which might have an impact on their behaviour at school – bringing the information about the family in the school with the purpose to support the child with the help of EPs. This is important, as it was stated by participants (aa, b, k, f, g, t u, vv), for raising teachers' awareness and understanding. The following were highlighted:

We definitely need all the help we can get – knowing what is going on in the lives of these pupils helps us in understanding their behaviour. (t)

When we have substantiated information about a case, we bring the issue to the staff meeting... and we try to think of appropriate ways to work with the pupil... because is not only the learning aspect is also the emotional and some problems might appear for short period of time... there are cases however whose problems are long-term.. SWS certainly could help.. (k)

even though we do not see them in school often ... actually only if we call them ... I think ... that they are important ... they know

more about the family ... They should work together with the school. (ii)

4.4.2.5 The SEN unit, SEN teacher and TAs

In discussing their views on good practice, participants talked about the SEN Unit which operates in School B and the support that is provided to pupils who are identified with SEN or those who are presenting with BESD.

In School A, despite not having an established SEN unit, the teachers, as well as the headteacher, interpreter and ZEP coordinator, talked about the professional expertise that is needed when working with pupils with BESD. From interviews with them, an SEN teacher directs the support provided for pupils identified as or suspected of having SEN for the whole school, works with teachers, especially during the initial stages of the assessment procedure, and fulfils the following responsibilities:

- after a period of observation provides detailed information about pupils' SEN which is used during the assessment process
- works with the child on one-to-one basis
- works closely with the families of pupils with SEN
- works with the EP
- develops and delivers personalised learning based on each pupil's strengths and weaknesses

- works with the teachers advising and contributing to the implementation of inclusive practices
- provides updates regarding the progress to class teacher of the child, parents and EP if required

Following their comments on how the SEN teacher works with them, the participants expressed their disappointment and concern about the limited time that is allocated for the SEN teacher to work in the school. As they pointed out, despite the number of cases, the SEN teacher works in the school for only three days a week:

In such cases, when the behaviour of a particular pupil is out of control and we cannot deal with it, then the SEN teacher is called to intervene. We cannot do much if working individually ... and if she is not working in the school daily ... Working together with the SEN teacher is ... important not only for the pupil but also the teacher ...
(u)

I think her work in the school is as essential as that of an EP ...
(mm)

We do not have the SEN teacher in the school on daily basis because her time is shared between our school and... I think another school or two school... (rr)

In School B, there is an SEN unit, but it has its own timetable and curriculum, different from that of the rest of the school. It operates under the same headteacher as the school, but is staffed by a qualified SEN teacher and two SEN TAs. They work with pupils who require supplementary or different learning arrangements from those offered in the mainstream classrooms, according to the 1999 SEN legislation (MOEC, 1999), but whose individual learning needs and difficulties do not require them to attend a special school. Pupils officially registered in the SEN Unit are five and including those who have been diagnosed

with autistic spectrum disorders and SEN. There are also other pupils attending when this is required –teachers and SEN teacher mostly reported pupils presenting with BESD as occasionally moved from their classrooms to the SEN Unit if their behaviour can not be managed by the teacher during lessons.

The SEN teacher and the TA were asked about the nature of the service that is offered by the unit and to express their views concerning the contribution it makes to working with pupils who present with BESD. The SEN teacher and TA said that the unit offers specialised facilities and provides support to pupils officially identified as having difficulties, as well ones removed to the unit temporarily from their classrooms. Its philosophy is to develop inclusive practices as an extension of the school's practices by working to:

- update teachers about the progress of pupils who attend both the school and the SEN unit
- contribute to the development of initiatives that promote the integration of pupils registered with the unit into the rest of the school
- support pupils who, though not registered with the unit, have significant learning difficulties and those with diagnosed SEN, either in their classrooms or in the unit
- attend staff meetings as part of the assessment procedure for new cases of pupils who are having difficulties

- work alongside teachers to conduct initial assessments and file applications with the EPD for pupils who are suspected of having SEN or BESD, as set out in the provisions of the 1999 SEN legislation.

One of the key roles of the SEN teacher is to provide these pupils with ways to access the curriculum. The teacher often also undertakes the role of SEN coordinator in the school, deciding on the procedures, approaches and initiatives that will meet the needs of the pupils, their learning and behaviour targets, as well as monitoring and assessing their progress and liaising with the teachers in the rest of the school.

It is noteworthy that the SEN teacher, TA and the headteachers mentioned the unit having an open access policy – as part of its general philosophy – being visited by groups of pupils or a class. They also work with the other teachers to foster an inclusive ethos and diminish any form of marginalisation of the pupils attending the unit.

Achieving progress with the pupils who attend the SEN unit is no easy task. It is the outcome of building knowledge of their strengths and weaknesses and learning styles over time. This knowledge enhances their practices, especially for pupils with BESD who due to the challenges they pose to their teachers and peers are profoundly disaffected about classroom activities:

the SEN teacher has a wide knowledge of conditions, syndromes, mild or severe learning difficulties and behaviour disorders. The help the SEN Unit's staff offers goes beyond the unit's walls, it extends to all aspects of teaching and learning in this school. (g)

Having to deal with not only those pupils who attend the unit on a full-time basis but also many other pupils registered with the school means that the SEN teacher and TA have

school-wide responsibilities. They talked about their concerns regarding fulfilling these responsibilities as the unit is short-staffed and there are no clear guidelines regarding their role and responsibilities:

There should be a more flexible schedule so as to be able to work more often outside the unit ... clear guidelines for how we work ... I cannot leave the unit and just visit a classroom if a problem emerges or on a regular basis ... If I leave the unit, there is no other member of staff who could step in and work with the TA. (h)

we need support from the MOEC ... It is hard for us to address all the needs of a school ... perhaps additional staff... for the needs of pupils attending the unit and those needing support in the class. (g)

The majority of the teachers in School B (8 out of 13) talked in positively about the role and responsibilities of the members of staff of the SEN unit and pointed out that having an SEN teacher is essential, especially for the learning of children with SEN and for working with the EP to set up ILPs for the pupils with BESD.

Perhaps of greater concern, however, is evidence collected during the interviews that the role teachers assigned to the staff of the SEN unit is one that relates to catering for pupils who have difficulty ‘adjusting’ in the classroom due to their behaviour and, thus, unloading them on to the unit to be kept out of the classroom for a time. The following statements are characteristic of this view (emphasis added):

Basically the colleague from the SEN unit *gets the child for some time and they work together* so as to *get away from the classroom* for some time when there is a problem. (vv)

If there could be *a gateway for these pupils and for me* ... in case a problem emerges, someone to come and get the child, until he calms down especially if he is aggressive or violent.. (ii)

I think it's important to have the unit not only for the work that is achieved with pupils with SEN ... but ... I think also with this boy who, his behaviour is very problematic. (aa)

Also a TA commented as follows:

There should be clear guidelines of how we work, with which children and to what extent. In some cases teachers might call us to the classrooms when there is a problem to remove a pupil from the classroom ... I think ... by removing the child maybe the problem is solved in the classroom, but what about the child ... any behaviour has underlying causes ... (l)

4.4.2.6 Home-school partnership

During the course of the interviews, the participants were asked to describe the families' involvement in the schools and how this contributes to develop good practice. Some were very concerned about this (particularly participants from School A) and commented:

Do you think ... that parents [refers to the Roma] want their children to be educated ... ? ... they only bring them to school for the benefits they get from the authorities ... [that is, the money they receive for sending their children to school]. (o)

we try to work with them, we contact them when a problem emerges, but the Roma have a particular way of thinking about education ... and the Cypriots with the problems they are facing, they get involved only if they accept there is a problem and only if they can. (pp)

the parents of this particular child, ... I have not met them ... The mother came to school once at the beginning of the year, she did not speak the language, but through her daughter, who speaks Greek, she thanked me. (k)

first, in this school, there are pupils for whom we have tried so hard to convince their parents to bring them to school and regularly. ... with the Roma; it seems that parents are neither interested in their child's progress, nor their learning or behavioural difficulties ... are indifferent generally... (mm)

We have families who don't even care about their children and what education they will have ... (cc)

we seek to have the family's involvement ... but, in many cases, this is just very difficult to get. (jj)

Despite such attitudes on the part of parents, the participants talked about the initiatives developed at school level for establishing positive and responsive home–school partnership. The headteachers of both schools, through describing initiatives that had been put forward and implemented, illuminated their philosophy according to which pupils would benefit from establishing positive home-school and encouraging parents to work closely with the school. Their views illuminated the nature of the families' involvement that was sought by the subject schools. They were very detailed in their responses on this subject and explained that the initiatives have been developed to not just encourage parents to come to the school more often but also develop in them a sense of the value of their involvement in all aspects of their children's learning. The participants at School A in particular pointed out that a philosophy of taking such initiatives extends from the general campaign by the educational authorities and schools to act on the social exclusion, marginalisation, discrimination and prejudice that exist for the people residing in the area around the school. Teachers (aa, cc, ff, jj, i, vv, mm) associated good practice with involvement of parents in the school.

The headteachers of both schools stressed that, when they were first appointed to the schools, they noticed that the relationships between the schools and the parents were poor and therefore needed to be reappraised and reformulated, built from a new beginning. As they noted, parental participation can potentially enhance the emotional and educational development of the pupils, so initiatives were developed in line with three objectives, which were to:

- develop more positive attitudes towards participating in the education of their children
- improve the attendance of the pupils (especially in School A)
- improve the relationships, attitudes and behaviour of the pupils at school, which may be a product of the general prejudice that exists in the area.

Some of the initiatives the schools developed are shown in Table 12.

Table 12: Initiatives developed in Schools A and B to improve home–school partnerships

School A	School B
After-school classes to learn Greek	School festival, organised with the help of parents and the parents' board
Counselling workshops in collaboration with the SWS, EPD and health services on supporting learning at home, hygiene, difficulties children have and awareness of behaviour	Regular parents' meetings with open discussions, the aim of which is to develop awareness of issues such as attendance, hygiene, homework and behavioural problems – the EP and SEN teacher or SWS officer are invited to them
Volunteering in school affairs	Traffic awareness day, cycling day
Involving the parents in the assessment procedure	School play, involving both pupils and parents
Day trip with the parents and children	Football day, devoted to the pupils, families and football. Professional footballers from different local clubs came. The pupils had the opportunity to see their favourite footballer and play with him
Exhibition of photographs collected from families of pupils at the school, regardless of their cultural or ethnic background – participation was celebrated and certificates were given	
Incentives provided by the SWS, such as school equipment, hygiene necessities, clothes, shoes, and food for during Christmas and the holidays	
Codes of Good Behaviour- Behaviour Contracts	

It was reported that such initiatives had achieved considerable success in involving parents in school at a general level and, when this happened, there were also improvements in the behaviour of the pupils, especially in those whose families were going through difficult times and previously rarely seen at school. It was also mentioned that creating and maintaining home-school links and establishing a good partnership with them, though worthwhile, is difficult to achieve, depending heavily on the efforts of the school to approach the families and encourage this to develop and on where parents locate the responsibility for their children's learning success. Also, as it was pointed by a teacher (cc) parents need encouragement to be part of their children's learning. Additionally the SEN teacher pointed out that:

Ok, I would like to see his parents in school more often but it is not only this ... it's whether or not they value the work that we do for their child ... beyond this, is about learning how to help their child at home ... but the family has many problems and the parents do not seem to understand that these have a huge impact on their child's emotional and educational development and progress. (g)

In an evaluation of the impact of these initiatives, it is important to return to the third of the objectives listed earlier by the participants – to improve behaviour, attitudes and relationships. A thorough appraisal and analysis of the interview data suggests that the participants generally believe the initiatives taken to re-establish and improve the link between the families and the school have been noteworthy for delivering successfully their objectives and generally fostering positive attitudes from both sides – that is, of parents towards the school and for school personnel to be more understanding towards parents. The following comments are illustrative:

What we have done in this school, I think is important ... as it's brought pupils and parents closer and parents and school closer. (o)

It is important, even, that we managed to bring to school a limited number of parents, but it takes really hard work to succeed in having them come to school. (u)

it is vital, especially for pupils with little chance, to have such experiences. ... bringing the families closer to the school enables parents to see firsthand behaviours that pupils present with and to have them as partners in the learning of their children. (bb)

this is very important because we are sort of bridging the gap between family and school. There are families whose children present with serious behavioural problems and this perhaps is due to home. I seriously believe that the actions we have organised have helped. (g)

4.4.3. School-level practices (ascertained from interview data)

The teachers explained that pupils' opportunities for learning experiences other than those in school are limited as, in a number of cases, their family and living conditions are rather problematic. In addition, in such cases, pupils were seen as bringing into school the stress, aggression and emotions that are triggered by the complexities of their home lives. Thus, the role that school has to play in pupils' lives is perceived as crucial, in terms of creating opportunities for building their self-esteem, self-worth and confidence and developing their enthusiasm for learning. In both schools, the participants stressed that, in their approaches to working with these pupils, they focus on their emotional and social development as individuals and then on their cognitive aspects, as learners. The practices and initiatives that are developed at school level play an important role in this process.

These practices, naturally, involve a broader spectrum of pupils than the classroom-level practices and the examples reported in this study were planned and delivered via a range of

appealing and interactive approaches in both the schools. The aims were to improve pupils' self-worth and confidence, help them achieve at something they are good at.

4.4.3.1 Building self-esteem and motivation via music and drama (School A)

The most commonly discussed programme implemented at school level in School A was the production of an album of music – songs were written, music composed, then it was recorded at a music studio.

This was a whole-school project that lasted a year and involved the great majority of pupils aged from 10 to 12, some of whom have behavioural difficulties. Its objective was to offer an opportunity for all pupils to express their skills in not only singing but also all the phases of the production of the music album, from writing the songs, to translating them into their own languages, to creating the cover for the album. The whole project required a lot of planning, preparation and coordination, involving extracurricular activities, too.

Initially proposed by the music teacher as part of a general objective for the school for the year 2007/2008 – learning to live together – it was soon adopted by all the staff and further objectives were set, regarding respecting differences and so on. Another aspect of this was that it provided experiences and opportunities for those pupils who would otherwise be excluded due to their behaviour and also raised their self-esteem. It was noted during interviews (respondents (t) and (qq)) that creating a sense of ownership of something such as the production of a music album also engendered feelings of responsibility and respect.

Deciding to implement an idea such as this, as the music teacher mentioned, carried with it a great deal of risk, but the dedication, effort and enthusiasm the pupils put into the project

were ‘extraordinary’. It was described as the opportunity of a lifetime for the pupils of this school, as well as a project that kept them motivated from beginning to end.

Following the production and distribution of the CD, the pupils reported to their teachers, the music teacher said, feelings and excitement, especially after the presentation of the songs in a concert held at the City Hall. Also, the teachers highlighted, the outcomes of this initiative were first noticeable in the pupils’ behaviour:

They were talking about it for months. We had a positive response, especially from those pupils with severe behavioural problems. (t)

When the pupils returned back from the studio and, having seen the outcome of their work, they were thrilled. What happened next was that pupils from Grade Στ wanted to go, too, and then, when we had a music lesson, they were asking to go again ... From that day on, it was mad – pupils would write lines, would come and find me during breaktime and, in general, there was so much excitement even from pupils that we had issues with their behaviour. (qq)

School A launched another project, too – the pupils organised, directed and presented a school play. It involved both Greek Cypriot and Roma pupils as part of its general objective of fostering positive behaviour, respecting individual and cultural differences and working in teams.

The pupils had to work together through all the phases involved in the preparation and presentation of the play – from developing the script, through rehearsing the scenes and choosing the costumes to taking part in the actual play. Pupils with and without behavioural difficulties and one pupil described as presenting social difficulties all worked together. The parents were also invited to take part.

The outcomes, following a term's hard work, were important as the adults had presented the pupils with a challenge and there were expectations placed on them to do their best to meet this challenge. It was reported:

The children had to collaborate for the production and the setting and outfits and they also had to collaborate to learn their roles ... At the end they presented something good, but the best thing was the changes in their behaviour ... pupils worked hard, reappraised their relationships and ... I am sure that, in the end, they felt proud of their achievement ... (t)

4.4.3.2 Building self-esteem via art and play (School B)

School B launched projects specifically targeted at pupils with BESD that, at the same time, all pupils at the school could take part in, such as the creation of graffiti on the school's walls, publication of a school magazine and a calendar using the pupils' drawings, pictures and work. These offered opportunities for pupils to get involved in activities or projects that they felt they could do well at, developing their sense of responsibility and dedication to their work, as well as promoting teamwork, with the view that these would be more effective than the usual classroom activities. As one of the headteachers at School B pointed out:

all children are good at something ... and they can achieve and in this 'something' we invest ... especially what we need sometimes is to find their strengths and build their confidence from there ... (b)

The participants in School B talked about the contribution such projects made to an increase in motivation and positive behaviour.

The SEN teacher highlighted that an important dimension of school-level practice is that it contributes to developing in pupils, especially those with SEN, a sense of confidence and being part of the whole, not being differentiated:

children with BESD are usually excluded from activities, mainly due to their behaviour and poor team skills, but, ... they need to feel valued and not marginalised and excluded,... school-level projects/programmes are such an opportunity for these children to feel part of the whole and to contribute ... if it involves activities that they are good at or they like it is also an opportunity to achieve ... (g)

Data from the interviews with the participants in School B show that practices developed at school level were mostly believed to contribute to enhancing school practice, gradually developing discipline and a sense of commitment and responsibility. Through them warm relationships are developed, due to the time and effort devoted to fulfilling the expectations and challenges that they offer.

11 out of 22 of the participants viewed the development of whole-school practices as an opportunity to work with pupils with BESD effectively and set the foundations for them feeling valued and confident that they can achieve at things they are good at and build relationships of trust. Especially School B participants pointed out the following:

Last year, a teacher was assigned to gather a group of pupils who would prepare and organise a school play and... among those pupils were also pupils whose behaviour was very problematic.. The outcome was good, actually very good, given the difficulties of these pupils ... they put so much effort and dedication into the play that the outcome was incredible. I think in the end the pupils realised how important their achievement was. (cc)

I would say that these actions ... have been effective, given the reactions of the pupils ... They have started developing a sense of trust towards their teachers. (dd)

The pupils were so happy. They have been coming to rehearsals very happy and excited and that was very good for them, especially because they would later return to class ... Through drama we have tried to include activities to get them socialised and teach them certain behaviours, such as working as a team. (h)

4.4.3.3 Behaviour policy: individual codes of good behaviour (School A)

The teachers were very aware of how individual codes of good behaviour, also called behaviour contracts, could work to both promote and maintain good behaviour.

The idea of the codes used by School A (see Appendix 10) is that they enable pupils to gradually develop a sense of self-control and responsibility. They developed out of the school's need to manage the violent behaviour of some pupils as they continuously caused damage to the school's premises or else committed minor or major offences or demonstrated abusive behaviour towards their peers or teachers (such as bullying, swearing and talking back).

Within these codes, rules of good behaviour are outlined as well as a reward system and possible consequences and sanctions that will occur if the pupil breaks these rules. The codes are drawn up in consultation with the pupils, involving them in deciding the reward and sanction system as well as the behaviour targets, typed up, printed out and have a place where the pupil, parents and teacher sign. This creates a sense of commitment and responsibility and, at the same time, makes it clear that the school wishes to involve the parents in this process. Apart from these points, the contracts do not emphasise any particular areas that the pupils need to improve and have no tangible targets or sanctions. These contracts are more about setting up routines and bringing about improvements in behaviour than setting learning targets.

The pupils may receive praise and rewards for their achievements in relation to attendance, engagement in school and classroom activities, the efforts they make in school and overall good behaviour. In addition, in the case of them breaking the rules of good behaviour, the pupils may receive ten minutes' detention or be excluded from school activities, such as trips –depending on how serious the issue was.

Although individual codes of good behaviour are intended to be a whole-school practice, the interviews revealed that only two teachers were widely applying the codes in their classes and only one was actually seen using it in the lesson (observation A5). These teachers expressed the view that they should become part of school life. It was suggested that such practices should involve pupils in deciding the reward and sanction system as well as the behaviour targets:

It took too much time to set up this code. Because we did not have such a behaviour management measure previously, some colleagues do not really use this ... although it would be essential for it to become part of school life. ... we have seen some results, because the pupils know beforehand what the rule is. (ss)

We also applied a code of good behaviour, which is a very good thingand it is a relatively new concept for working with pupils who present with challenging behaviour. Children sign and they know that they will experience the consequences if their behaviour is not the one agreed in the contract. Although this is something new, if it is improved and used by the whole school, we will have very good results. (rr)

4.4.4. Classroom-level practices (obtained from interview data)

4.4.4.1 Teachers' personal and professional qualities

Teachers' approaches and qualities can have a significant bearing on the work with, and the progress of, pupils with BESD. This was the commonest response when participants from

both schools were asked what they think works with pupils with BESD and what the role of the teacher is in this.

Participants (b,cc, ff, g,ii,jj, pp, qq, ss, rr,t, u) described different personal and professional qualities of teachers as well as features of their teaching relating to the delivery of the lesson, which they considered important in creating a positive and motivating teaching and learning atmosphere and, then, being effective when working with all pupils. These descriptions were detailed and thorough. However, they were refined and are grouped into three main categories in Table 13 – their professional and some personal qualities and others relating to the actual teaching and learning process, not in any particular order.

Table 13: The professional, personal and other qualities of teachers reported by participants

Professional	Personal	Features relating to the delivery of the lesson
Understanding of BESD	Sense of humour	Uses a system of reinforcing, praising and encouragement
Knowledge of pupils' individual circumstances	Patience	Uses technology
Knowledge of pupils' strengths, weaknesses	Ability to empathise, caring	Appealing methods and approaches
Up-to-date training	Good listener	Proactive
	Positive personality and attitudes	Well-organised
	Positive relationships with pupils	Focused and plans well
		Promotes teamwork
		Practices differentiation
		Creates usefully challenging and motivating tasks
		Style and mode of delivering (promotes discovery of knowledge)

Regarding the personal qualities, the participants mostly mentioned desirable qualities relating to personality:

Being a competent teacher, well-trained and talented, is only one side of the coin ... On the other side is the personality, the sense of humour, care and attitude when working with them ... but not only this ...I think all these are necessary... (ee)

As this participant (ee) further explained, there are teachers who are skilled, talented, well-trained with a good understanding of SEN but no interest in working with pupils with BESD and no interest in shifting away from traditional teaching. However it is, as the EP said:

‘to be closer to pupils and to have generally a positive personality and attitude towards children who are challenging’(n)

The pupils’ behaviour sometimes, as a headteacher said:

is like a wall and this wall hides things behind it, maybe personal problems and ... the ability of the teacher to see behind the wall, to show understanding and care, ... then the teacher will be able to develop a more positive relationship ... (t)

The participants also described professional qualities of teachers as being important, such as training, knowledge and understanding of the nature of BESD. Three participants (o, g, u) associated the four professional qualities of teachers of pupils with BESD, which are presented in Table 13 with a sense of confidence when working with pupils with BESD.

Regarding this last aspect, it was quite often highlighted by participants that the approach and strategies employed in the classroom are reflected in the outcomes. A good teacher, as 13 out of 22 participants stated (mm,pp,qq, ss, t, aa, b, cc, ee, ff, dd, g, i, jj, l, vv –59 .09%), has to have a ready smile during lessons, a genuine sense of humour and a style of working that enables pupils to be active players in their learning. In order to be able to achieve these

things, teachers must be well-organised, clear about learning targets, proactive and, very importantly, be able to create learning challenges and trigger pupils' interest. That way, the lessons will be appealing to them, which will have a direct impact on their motivation and degree of participation.

Two participants argued that it is very important for teachers:

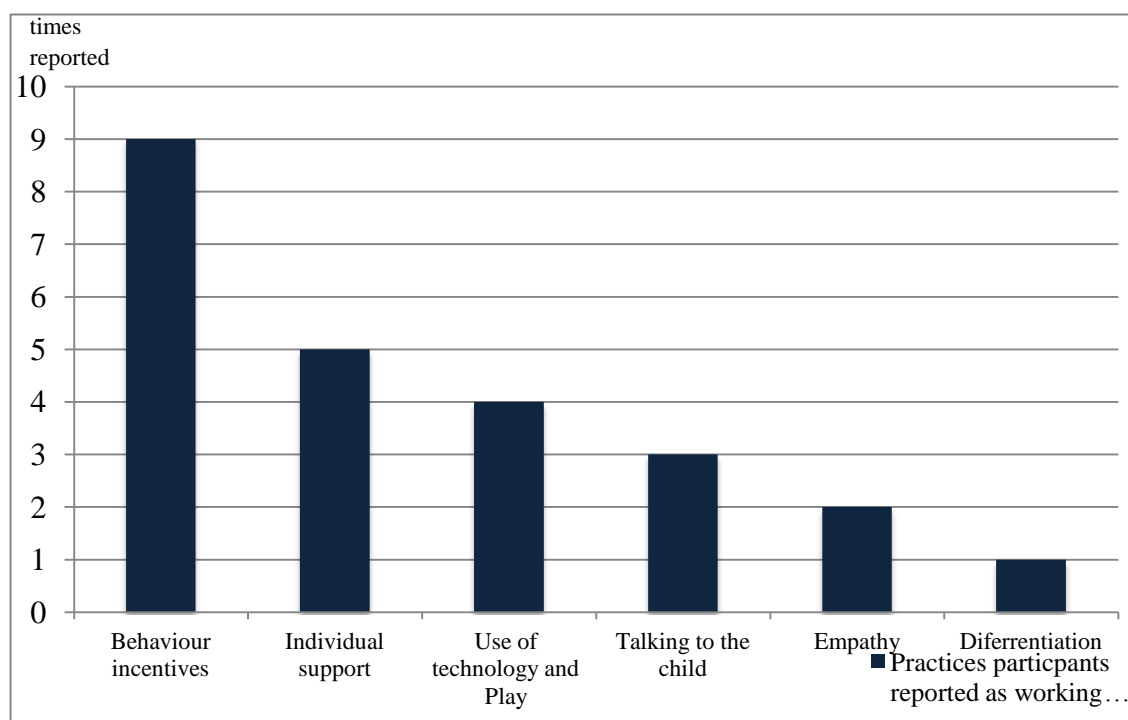
To be able to distinguish between behaviour and child, and to see a positive side... (vv)

to have a sense of humour ... all these years of experience taught me one thing, regardless of behavioural difficulties or not, if the way a lesson is delivered is appealing, challenging and generates a sense of ownership of learning in pupils, the outcomes are always positive and promising. (aa)

Participants talked about specific practices that they consider effective and apply during lessons, especially as the numbers of pupils in the classroom do not allow for much individualised learning. The three most frequently mentioned, as shown in Chart 4, are 'behaviour incentives' (praise, encouragement and reward), 'individual support' and 'use of technology and play', but also considered important are approaches such as 'talking with the pupil' when angry or misbehaving, showing care instead of being confrontational to deal with difficult behaviour. It was also noted that where children are seated can be linked with how the teacher is working them and what outcomes this work will have. For example the teacher in observation A1 mentioned that he placed the two children who are presenting with BESD and learning difficulties closed to his desk so he can provide support more easily and frequently:

'The girl is sitting in the front row close so I can have better look on how she is working or responding during the lesson' (pp)

Chart 4: Classroom practices participants regarded as effective



In commenting on the praise and reward system, the participants often linked it with a ‘star system’, ‘prize-giving’ and ‘paper awards’ for (mostly) younger pupils or ‘privileges’ for older pupils, such as ten minutes extra play at break-time and football time. Moreover, the headteachers of School B (b, k) talked about a reward system established in school for ‘classrooms demonstrating good behaviour’ on a monthly basis. This is celebrated during assembly and the classroom that receives the ‘good behaviour’ trophy most frequently wins a day trip. The system values not only the individual behaviour of pupils, good manners and positive contributions, but also a general contribution to positive thinking. As the SEN teacher (g) argued, praise and reward systems should be established by all teachers in a school as it enables stable progress in developing self-esteem, boosting the confidence of pupils during lessons, encourages participation and celebrates achievement.

Not all the participants seemed to share this view. The EP commented that the impact of praise and reward system has on pupils' behaviour is immediate but not long-term, so should be used carefully:

however ... what currently happens is that this approach is misused by many teachers and, in some cases, it is not really respected by pupils, who can easily return to their previous behaviour ... this is especially tricky with older children. (n)

The second approach – the 'use of technology and play' can work for many pupils although they present behavioural difficulties, it was mentioned by participants (9 teachers and headteachers out of 13- in School B), they are very skilled with computers and technology in general – it seems to help them concentrate. This is the case in the following example, given by a participant:

M. is a different child when he sits by the computer – he can explain everything and works very fast ... and he likes maths as well ... it is probably the one lesson he is very good at ... and I realised that when a lesson involves the use of a computer, he concentrates to the maximum ... he does not cause any trouble and he is very eager to learn and assist in the class ... I think ... this works for other pupils and it is important to use technology. (cc)

One of the difficulties of the pupils pointed out (by the headteacher and the class teachers) for observations in School A was language difficulties. The participants in School A added language to the list of difficulties pupils with BESD can have – very often not participating in classroom activities either due to Greek not being their mother tongue or having learning difficulties linked with language. In such cases, teachers who give support at an individual level to help ameliorate this play a key role in how well those pupils engage with the lessons. The interpreter in School A argued:

The way I see it ... it is not only a matter of problematic behaviour, traumatic experiences and emotional difficulties; it is also a matter of not understanding what is happening in the classroom ... If a pupil does not understand the language, it is possible he or she is not going to engage with the activities and perhaps is going to misbehave ... and ... these children need to feel that someone is helping them to learn, not just me, when they are having intensive lessons in Greek. (o)

4.4.5 Classroom-level practices (obtained from observation data)

4.4.5.1 The pupils with BESD who were observed

During the data collection process, and as outlined in Methodology chapter (Chapter 3), teachers were first observed and then interviewed. Totally 29 observations were conducted with 16 teachers.

At the beginning of each observation session, the teacher provided information to complete Part A of the observation form. This information was necessary during the analysis stage and made it possible to recall the lesson in great detail. It also provided a detailed and more complete picture of each pupil's behaviour, characteristics and needs.

Altogether, 16 teachers and 16 pupils identified with BESD (15 boys and 1 girl) were observed during lessons. Of the 16 pupils, 10 attended School A, the remainder School B. In School A, 8 pupils were Roma and 2 Cypriot, while, in School B, 4 pupils were Cypriot, one was Romanian and one was African.

Of the 16 pupils, 3 had been officially diagnosed with SEN –1 pupil with a 'behavioural disorder' and 2 with learning difficulties. For the rest of the pupils, applications requesting assessments of their educational needs had been filed (13 pupils mentioned to be referred or in the process to be referred to the EPD), but the outcomes were unknown at the time the

observation sessions were being carried out. It should be noted that the majority of the pupils who were observed in School A were Roma and among the difficulties presented by them was their poor acquisition of Greek. There was some question as to whether or not the educational authorities were neglecting to examine their cases as their major difficulty was language (9 out of 16 pupils had mother language other than Greek).

4.4.5.2 Classroom milieu

During the observation sessions, one of the aspects focused on was the classroom milieu – that is, the resources available, layout of the classroom and seating arrangements, as well as the general mood created by the classroom setting.

The headteachers of Schools A and B and the ZEP coordinator mentioned during interviews that, despite the fact the schools are part of the ZEP programme, resources are limited and the facilities outdated. It was reported by participants that teachers devote much of their personal time for planning and creating the resources needed for the delivery of their lessons. This was seen happening especially during the literacy lesson, where teachers created posters, signs with instructions, puppets and display material needed for the lesson (such as B5 observation). So, they have to be resourceful, thinking how to make things work in the classroom and with pupils with BESD.

Teaching resources and technology

The observations provided evidence of how the teachers, with the limited resources available, moulded the classroom environment, plus how many of them used resources other than textbooks and how classrooms were organised.

In 6 out of 29 observations, the teachers delivered lessons which were interesting for the majority of pupils, especially those with BESD, and were very resourceful and enthusiastic. These six observation sessions involved 5 different teachers out of the total of 16 (observations A7, A8, A9, B2, B5, B6).

The teachers in observations A7, A8, A9 and B5, were well-organised and very resourceful. These lessons were so enjoyable that the pupils actually concentrated for almost the whole lesson. The classrooms were very colourful, with the work of the pupils set out in displays, creating a generally positive and motivating feeling on entering the classroom. The teacher in observation B5, in particular, was very active, with a genuine interest for the children. On the walls were colourful posters and signs created by the teacher, as well as an ‘achievement ladder’ (pictures of pupils and the points they had earned for different tasks were displayed on different rungs of the ladder to indicate their progress) among other resources in the classroom. Similarly, in observations A8 and A9, the classroom setting could be characterised as very motivating and welcoming. The teacher had put a great deal of effort into organising the classroom so that it would be attractive to any pupil (see Observation A8/A9).

The teachers in the great majority of the other lessons observed appeared to use the lesson’s textbook as their main resource for facilitating and enriching the delivery of their learning objectives.

Concerning technology, it became apparent that there was at least one computer in each of the classrooms, in some cases, two. They were not used in an effective way, however, and did not seem to facilitate the work with the pupils in any way. Interestingly, during

observation A3, the pupil identified with BESD presented to be more off task and disruptive than at any other point in the lesson when working on the computer (see Appendix 11-observation A3). The teacher in this case showed no interest in redirecting the pupil back to the task when the pupil spent 40 minutes surfing the internet instead of working on the set activities like the rest of the class (in the second half of the lesson). Only in the cases of observations B2 and B5 was the computer used effectively during class. There the two teachers used the talent and interest of the pupil in technology and computers to engage him in the set activities.

Physical environment and seating arrangements

One of the aspects of classroom practice observed was how the physical environment was shaped and how positive, welcoming or even inspiring this was for pupils.

The classroom environment in School A was generally not very well organised. In the main, it did have displays of pupils' but it did not have those features which would create a motivating and inspiring atmosphere, triggering an enthusiasm for learning. In comparison, School B appeared more organised, warm and welcoming, even though the building was old.

The classroom layout and, thus, seating arrangements were other factors that emerged in the process of analysing the observational data. In the vast majority of the observation sessions, the seating arrangements were the teachers' responsibility and set out so that they would either have more control of pupils' behaviour or it would be less noticeable or intrusive during the lessons.

In six cases (A1, A5, A6, A7, B2, B6), pupils were sitting close to the teachers and next to another pupil with similar difficulties or who was Roma (School A mainly), in another six cases (A8, A9, A10, B1, B2, B4), they were sitting in groups and in a further five cases (A2, A3, A4, B3, B5), they were sitting alone (Appendix 11).

In half of the cases where pupils were sitting alone or next to pupils with similar characteristics or ethnicity, pupils with BESD were off task or disruptive and did not engage with the classroom activities (6 out of 12 cases – A1, A2, A3, A5, A6, B3). In three of the cases (A1, A3, A6), the pupils were working on a different task from that of the rest of the class.

The decision of teachers to place pupils with BESD next to pupils with similar educational needs or of similar ethnicity seems to have affected their behaviour as well as their progress throughout the lessons. In those cases where the pupils were seated in a group (A4, A8, A9, A10, B1, B2, B4) and responsibilities were assigned to them during tasks or encouragement was provided, they were more responsive. Table 14 summarises the information concerning the place of pupils during lesson and also provides information concerning their behaviour and engagement with lesson.

Table 14: Seating arrangements and behaviour of child

Pupil's seating place	observation	Observation	Pupil's behaviour
Sitting close to the teacher's desk	A1, A6, B2, A5, A7, B6	A1, A6	Working on different task
		B2, A5	Off task/disruptive
Sitting in group	A4, A8, A9, A10, B1, B2, B4	A4, A8, A9, A10, B1, B2, B4	On task
next to a child with similar difficulties/ characteristics	A1, B2, A5, A6	A1, A5, A6 B3	Off task
alone	A2, A3, B3, B5	A2, A3, A5, A6,	Isolated from activities and off task

Thus, given the information provided in Table 14, it can be seen that when pupils were sitting alone, they usually were isolated from classroom activities and usually they presented being off task continuously (see also Appendices 11 and 12). Equally, when they sat with another pupil with similar characteristics, they were generally off task and disruptive.

Teaching assistant

In none of the observations was a TA seen working with the teachers. Both Schools A and B, however, have appointed TAs – School B has two – who work in the school. In School A the TA works with individual cases, while in School B the TA works in the SEN unit with another TA and the SEN teacher.

4.4.5.3 Working with pupils – the teachers' actions

In exploring how teachers perceive good practice, the answers to questions asked in the interviews carried out in the course of this study shed light on the personal and professional qualities that help teachers to work with pupils with BESD and manage problems with behaviour. What helped considerably in gathering information about these qualities was the fact that the interviews were carried out after observations which helped to direct the focus of conversation on the lessons observed and the pupils that were pointed by participants to presenting with BESD. The qualities reported by participants were presented in Table 13. However in this section of the reporting, the qualities are discussed with reference to the lessons observed and then in Chapter 5 these are discussed further as per their contribution to working effectively with pupils presenting with BESD.

Personal and Professional qualities as well as *features relating to the delivery of the lesson*, participants in this study suggested, contribute to improving pupils' self-confidence, trigger their interest in learning and develop a sense of ownership of what they have learned. It was also reported that knowledge of pupils' needs and focused and clear lesson planning help teachers to cope well with those needs.

The teachers' approaches which were observed during observations are detailed below:

- **explains tasks** the teacher provides explanations and clarifications of tasks or teamwork activities or instructions on how to work
- **opens discussions** the teacher talks about the lesson or opens a discussion on a topic that either involves the pupils participating or else talks in a 'lecturing style'

- **provides individual support** the teacher approaches pupils when needed to redirect them back to the task or provides support on a one-to-one basis and talks to them when they are upset or refuse to collaborate with peers or generally in lessons
- **behaviour incentives-** actions used by the teacher to boost self-esteem and encouraging positive behaviour – using a praise and reward system, visual reminders or incentives to encourage positive behaviour and celebrate pupils' achievements
- **Reminders of behaviour** the teacher enhances pupils' participation by reminding them of the behaviour rules or targets, such as those in a behaviour contract

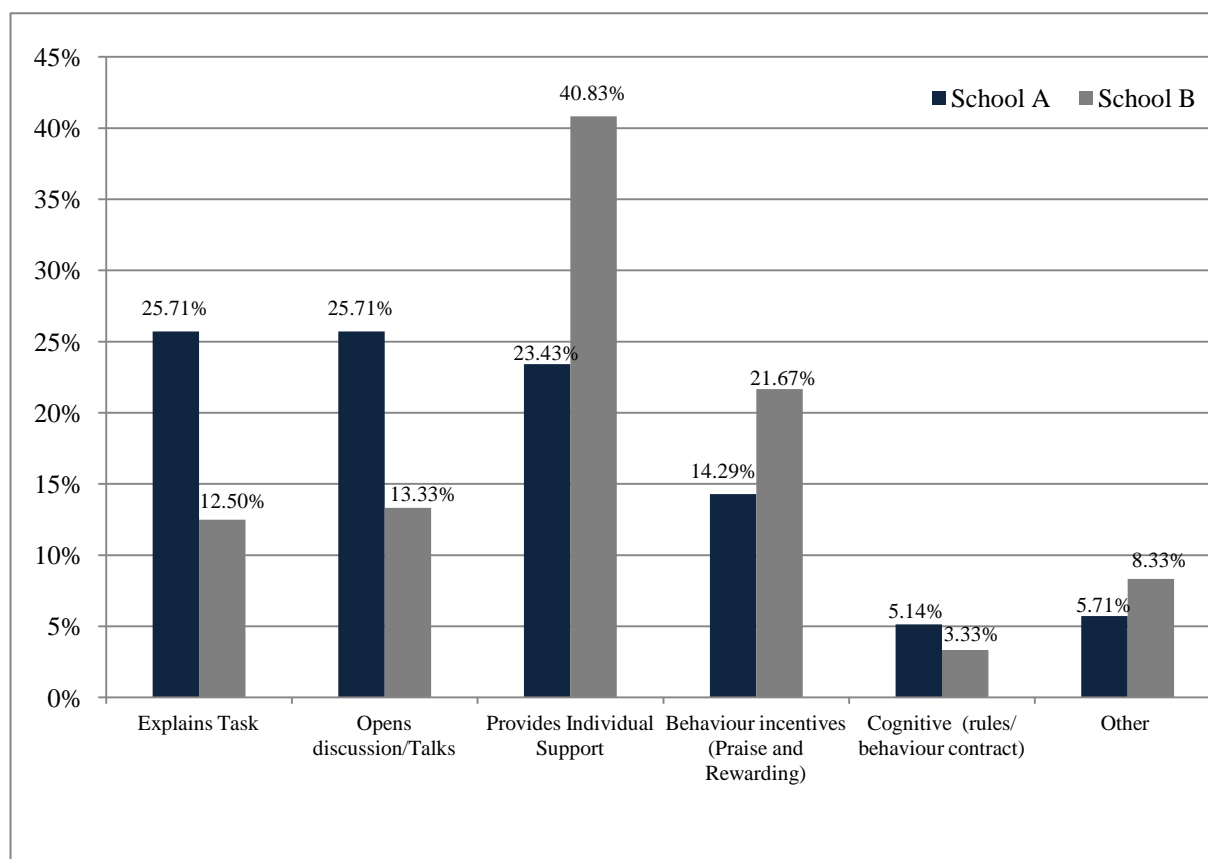
Recordings made concerning *other* included the following

- **other** (a) the teacher assigns responsibilities and active roles in the classroom or for activities requiring teamwork, which promotes the active interaction in the lesson, or else raises expectations. (b) ignores the behaviour of the child (Appendix 12)

An overview of actions observed during the course of observations is presented in Chart 5. All the recordings made during observations for each of the above mentioned actions were calculated for each school separately and then transferred into percentages. As this Chart shows (Appendix 12, page 357 analysis of percentages), there are significant differences in the ways that the teachers from both Schools A and B work. Teachers in School B, for example, engage less in discussions and the explanation of tasks than School A, provide individual support to pupils with BESD more (23.43 to 40.83%, respectively), use praise, rewarding and motivational incentives (i.e. star system for good effort) more than in School A (14.29 to 21.67%, respectively), whilst school A delivered their lesson with providing in a

more *lecture* style lesson (*explain tasks* 25.71%, *opens discussions* 25.71%). Moreover, the ‘Contract of Good behaviour’, which was mentioned as a school policy of School A, was seen to be applied only 5.14% (mostly in observation A5) and 3.33% in School B.

Chart 5: Overview of teacher’s approaches observed



Examining Chart 5 more closely, it becomes evident that teachers in School B applied more approaches related to modifying behaviour and redirecting the focus of pupils and were not related to providing behaviour incentives (other = 8.33%) than did School A. Those approaches were, for example, assigning responsibilities, identifying aspects of learning that the pupils are good at and asking them to work using these (using a computer, for example)

or encourage the pupils 'contributions to the lessons. In addition in some cases teachers were ignoring the behaviour of the child.

In School A, the lessons observed were delivered in a more *lecturing style*, with teachers talking the majority of the time, either engaging in discussions, providing information about the lesson rather than encouraging children to discover new knowledge (25.71%) about the lesson or explaining tasks (25.71%). The teachers devoted almost double the time the teachers in School B (12.50%) did to explaining tasks. The fact that a significant number of pupils in School A are of a nationality other than Greek Cypriot and have language difficulties is very likely to have shaped this style of delivering lessons. It was interesting to see also that in observations such as A2, A5 and A6, the pupils were isolated from what the rest of the classroom was doing (they were daydreaming, withdrawn, refusing to work like the rest of the classroom), mainly because they could not understand the lesson. In one case (A1), the pupil being observed was not taking part in the lesson and working on a different task from that of the rest of the class and appeared to be having difficulties communicating in Greek.

Teachers' confidence and 'lecturing style' of teaching

In three of the observation sessions (A1, A2 and B3), it appeared that the teachers did not feel confident when working with the pupils with BESD. Little attention was paid to providing challenges and ensuring that the pupil is fully integrated into the activities that the rest of the class engages with. Teachers seemed more concerned about minimising the impact of behaviour in the classroom and deliver the lesson with the least possible

disruption than ensuring that the pupils, regardless of their difficulties, enjoy the learning process.

Observation A1: Maths

Teacher: Male (pp), 19 years working as a teacher, 2 working in School A

Number of pupils: 13

Pupil: Girl, Roma, Grade Στ', presenting with BESD and language difficulties

The subject of observation A1 was a girl who had been identified with BESD. She was 12 years old, Roma in origin and sitting at a desk at the front of the classroom, very close to the teacher. The class had an experienced male teacher (he had been teaching for 19 years, the last couple of which he had spent in School A). Throughout the lesson, the teacher did not, in any way at all, encourage the girl to get involved with the tasks that the rest of the pupils in the class were working at. Instead, she was working in a book that did not relate to the lesson at all.

The teacher provided constant individual support during the first 40 minutes of the observation session, but then gave up. That individual support, however, was for a task the girl was working on that was irrelevant to the subject being taught to the rest of the class at the time – they were doing maths; she was working on language material. She was therefore left out of all the activities in the class and was working on her own.

No participation on her part was observed, nor any indication of an interest in working with the other pupils. Also no encouragement was provided to her by her teacher to engage in any of the classroom activities. During interview, the teacher was asked about the girl's contribution in the lesson and the fact that she was working on irrelevant to the lesson material. The teacher explained that the girl not only presents with BESD (emotional and

social difficulties, but also learning difficulties related to language and communication difficulties. The teacher attributed this to the poor attendance of the girl and the fact that she does not have much support at home. The following were also stated by the teacher:

the girl's difficulties are not that severe, but the fact that she does not have a regular attendance makes it difficult for her to catch up and being able to work on the same tasks... she receives one-to-one support twice a week... but I think is not enough... she needs also one-to-one support during lessons, also for her social difficulties.... hmm ...a TA in the class perhaps could help. 'A' does not speak Greek and her communication is poor and this makes my work difficult.... I think.... the fact that she does not attend school regularly is also a problem. (pp)

Observation A2: Literacy

Teacher: *Female, 2 years working as a teacher, 1 year working in School A*

Number of pupils: 13

Pupil: *Boy, Roma, Grade A', presenting with BESD and language difficulties*

The teacher in observation A2 was a young teacher, in her second year of teaching first grade pupils. The subject of the observation, a boy, was identified by the teacher as presenting with BESD, he was seven years old and Roma. He was brought to class by his mother, who was holding his bag when the lesson was about to start. He seemed bad-tempered and rushed to the end of the classroom, found his desk and sat. He did not open his bag and did not take his books out. Meanwhile, the teacher began delivering instructions about the classroom activities and did not pay much attention to him at that point.

The boy, apart from sitting on his chair, doing nothing, kept challenging the teacher with his behaviour. The teacher, after a while, tried to encourage him to engage in the lesson by saying, 'E, please get your books and open them ...'. At some point, he left his seat and was wandering round the classroom, drawing the attention of everybody and disrupting other

pupils. When eventually he went back to his seat, he kept disrupting other pupils for about 15 minutes then stopped. The teacher appeared to feel uncomfortable about his challenging behaviour and looked stressed. She tried to avoid confrontation by raising the tone of her voice or ignoring him and continuing with the lesson. She also tried constantly, from her desk, to redirect him back to the task, but did not get much of a response. At times when the boy's behaviour was challenging, the teacher seemed to feel uncomfortable about how to react (she tried raising her voice or repeatedly asking the boy to open his books or watching him without saying anything to him).

Towards the end of the observation session, she asked the two observers to leave the class – probably because she felt that the situation was getting out of control – so it lasted for 60 minutes instead of 80.

Observation B3: Literacy

Teacher: female (aa), 11 years working as a teacher, 1 year working in School B

Number of pupils: 19

Pupil: Boy, Cypriot, Grade E', presenting with BESD and identified with learning difficulties

The teacher in observation B3 was an experienced teacher, in her eleventh year of teaching, but her first working in a ZEP school. She was well-prepared for the lesson, which was about World War II, and brought into the classroom teaching materials that she had created specifically for the lesson.

At the beginning of the lesson, the teacher pointed at the red circle on a 'traffic light' sign on the board. This meant that the lesson was starting and the pupils needed to stop what they were doing and pay attention. The pupils seemed well-trained to respond to such direction and the lesson got underway. Soon after pointing at the 'traffic light' sign, the teacher began

the literacy lesson by asking questions about the lesson taught the previous day and reminding them of the new knowledge that they had learned.

The boy I had been directed to observe was 11 years old, Cypriot and sat alone at one of the desks at the back of the classroom. While the teacher was delivering some instructions for the lesson, the boy was wandering around, asking for a sharpener to sharpen his coloured pencils and making fun. He ignored the teacher's request to go back to his place. After a little while, the teacher approached him and tried to convince him to go to his place. When he was finally in his place, the rest of the class had already started working on their tasks in pairs. The boy just sat in his place, refusing to work. Then the teacher went and sat next to the boy and stayed there until the end of lesson, sticking the pictures down on to the paper with him, creating a poster. She delivered all the instructions to the rest of the class from there and focused mainly on maintaining good order in the classroom. No encouragement was observed. The pupils were engaging in tasks mainly as a result of following her instructions.

At this point it worth mentioning what the teacher stated in the interview concerning working with this particular pupil:

I feel I cannot do anything, the lessons many times, depend on his behaviour and mood. If he comes to school in a good mood, then maybe the lesson will go well ... It is the first time in my career that I have had to face a situation like this ... (aa)

Teachers' qualities and links with working effectively with pupils with BESD

The observation sessions shed light on an aspect of working with pupils with BESD that had been discussed in the interviews and confirms some of the issues outlined in Chapter 2

(section 2.8.2.2.) concerning teachers' and other members of staff's personal and professional qualities).

No special skills or approaches were applied by the teachers, but a positive attitude, sense of humour, enthusiasm and caring for the pupils and the lessons and establishing positive relationships were among the qualities identified in five of the observation sessions (A7, A8, A9, B2, B5). The teachers did not seem to have had up-to-date training concerning BESD (based on their interview comments – rr, qq, cc, ee). They did, however, appear to be well-organised, use a balanced praise and reward system, have a broad understanding of their pupils' strengths, weaknesses and difficulties and created challenging activities and motivating classroom environments that were a good fit with the pupils' characteristics.

These findings are in line with the factors noted in the analysis of the data from the interviews, which suggest that teachers' personal and professional qualities and competences can have an impact on pupils' behaviour and are key to facilitating good practice when working with pupils with BESD. Some reflections on key details from observations A7, A8, A9, B2 and B5 are given below.

Observation A7: Maths

Teacher: Female (rr), Deputy headteacher, 20 years working as a teacher, 1 year working in School B

Number of pupils: 10

Pupil: Boy, Roma, Grade 7', presenting with BESD and language difficulties

The class teacher was in her twentieth year in teaching, but her first in School A. She was recently appointed to work in this school after being promoted to a deputy headteacher.

The pupil being observed was a boy, nine years old, with BESD, exhibiting challenging behaviour and learning difficulties that are related to his language difficulties. The boy was sitting in the front row, in front of the teacher's desk, and, during the first 16 minutes, was not on task, was speaking excessively with the boy next to him and distracting other pupils. The teacher managed, gradually, to gain and hold his attention.

The lesson was about dividing numbers greater than 100 using different strategies. The teacher started the lesson with a game, encouraging all the pupils to take part and assigning different roles to them, including the pupil with BESD. At the time, it seemed that the child was randomly selected, but, on reflection, the teacher had mentioned in the interview (rr) that this pupil needs to be given attention as he is very insecure and has very low self-confidence:

his family left their country as refugees when he was about five and he feels really insecure. From what I know, they suffered strong violence ... due to the troubles his family suffered... He has many difficulties ... mainly emotional and being aggressive. (rr)

The lesson was well-organised and included a variety of activities and materials, such as Snap Cubes, number lines, Dienes blocks (see Appendix 11) and computer software. Of the different activities and tasks that were planned for the pupils, most were suitable for any learning level, but required that the pupils be active and work together. They were set the challenge to practise division using all the materials available to their team and within a given time. The pupils first worked in pairs and then in groups of four. They were to first visualise the numbers and then practise dividing with them.

The constant encouragement given by the teacher, the praise and individual support, as well as the increase in the level of difficulty after each task was completed, set them challenges

and kept the motivation of pupils up. The lesson was organised as a game with a degree of competition as the pupils were working in teams, trying to discover different ways of dividing numbers and then describing them on paper. Once the pupils had done this, they came to the board and explained their thinking.

Even though the behaviour of the boy with BESD at the beginning of the lesson was very challenging to the teacher, this did not continue because he was assigned different responsibilities. He appeared very responsive to the requirements of the majority of the tasks and the impact of the language barrier and behavioural difficulties diminished when he was kept busy and focused for a significant amount of time. This teacher also reported while being interviewed that:

....it requires a very skilled and patient teacher... who presents a certain degree of understanding and who is generally empathetic... It also requires a lot of planning so as the child remains engaged in tasks and this pupil also needs constant reassurance because he lacks confidence... and I spend a lot of time preparing at home for up to 3 different subjects everyday (rr)

Observations A8 and A9: Music

Teacher: Female (qq), 22 years working as a teacher, 3 years working in School A

Number of pupils: A8-13 pupils, A9-10 pupils

Pupil: A8- Boy, Grade E', Cypriot, presenting with BESD and language difficulties

A9- Boy Roma, Grade Στ', presenting with BESD and language difficulties

Two different grades, two different pupils and one teacher were observed in both the A8 and A9 observations. The subject of the lesson was music and each observation session lasted for 40 minutes. The pupil in observation A8 was a Cypriot fifth grade (Class E1) pupil who

was 11 years old and the pupil in observation A9 was a Roma sixth grade (Class Στ1), 12 years old.

The teacher's objective was to compose music for a song, the lyrics of which had been produced by the students in previous lessons. The lesson was delivered in exactly the same way and using the same approaches in both the A8 and A9 sessions.

The lesson began with music – the pupils could sing different songs from those on the CD that had been created and recorded with the help of the teacher. They were rehearsing for a forthcoming event. After this, the teacher asked the pupils to take their musical instruments from the shelves and create their own music for the first line of the poem that they had written the previous week.

It is important to note at this point that the desks in the classroom had been transformed into interactive stave boards. The music teacher, with the help of the headteacher(as she explained during interview), had bought pieces of white acrylic, turned them into stave boards and attached them to the desks in the music classroom. This had come about because the pupils did not bring their textbooks to school very often, with the excuse that they had forgotten them, or else kept losing them, so the teacher decided to use an alternative way of working with them to trigger their motivation and interest in learning. Also, the layout of the classroom and the seating arrangements were organised in such a way as to encourage pupils to work in pairs. It was attractive, too – very different from any other classroom in the school. Many posters were arranged on the walls of the classroom, as well as the work of the pupils, there was a big rug on the floor and a projector. The music teacher also bought sponge balls and other materials that could be used during the lessons.

To return to the lesson, the pupils took their mandolins, drums and metallophones from the shelves and started working on their tasks for the length of time that the teacher had allocated to them. After that, the teacher asked them to present what they had created. Then, with the help of the teacher, they made modifications to the music they had produced. The teacher wrote it on the board and played it on the piano and the pupils were asked again to give their suggestions. Each child worked on the same line of the poem, but they used different instruments.

In both the observations, the pupils with BESD were disruptive at the beginning of the lesson. One of the pupils, for example, was playing the mandolin and shouting while the teacher was explaining the notes and giving each child, individually, the chance to play. The persistence and firmness of the teacher, however, together with the constant rotation of tasks (6 tasks in a 40-minute lesson), did not allow any space for these pupils to misbehave or disrupt the lesson further.

The lesson had been designed to include activities that are suitable for any child and do not require any special skills or great knowledge of music. For instance, the line that the pupils were putting to music consisted of four words. The pupils first had to split them into syllables – two to four for each word – then decide on the notes, working in pairs for this part of the lesson. After deciding which notes to use, they had to try them and make amendments. This process was exciting for them and they were actually learning how songs are created. Both the pupils with BESD were working like any of the other pupils in the class. The effects of their learning and language difficulties were diminished to the point of being minimal and the pupils seemed to enjoy the lesson.

As the music teacher mentioned when interviewed, when she first started working at the school, the lessons were a 'nightmare' (qq). Music was not respected at all and the pupils' behaviour was worse in these lessons than any others. In some cases, the teacher reported, the behaviour of pupils, especially those two with BESD, has changed from refusing to even go into the classroom to being happy to go in and being focused, concentrating for the whole lesson, trying to play the musical instruments and even writing down notes:

they did not even want to sit in the classroom ... in some cases I was coming into the classroom and they were leaving ... it was out of control ... but I had to think of alternative ways to make the lesson more enjoyable, to put in activities that required action, mobility and play and direct their attention towards the classroom. (qq)

The pupils' behaviour changed because of the learning opportunities they enjoyed outside school as a result of the music lessons, such as the visits to the recording studio, the creation of the music album and singing in the town hall (see section 4.4.4.1). The relationship between the pupils and the teacher, especially those pupils with BESD, was very warm and the pupils seemed to respect their teacher.

Observation B2: Maths and Literacy

Teacher: Male (cc), 6 years working as a teacher, 1 year working in School B

Number of pupils: 20

Pupil: Boy, Grade Στ, Cypriot, presenting with BESD

The pupil observed in this session was 12 years old and Cypriot. The teacher described his behaviour as challenging and abusive. It was noted on the observation form that he uses strong language and abusive behaviour not only towards his peers but also towards the teacher. He is seated in a group with another three pupils, very close to the teacher. The pupil who sits next to this boy is also a boy and he too displays behavioural difficulties. The

class teacher, young teacher in his sixth year of teaching, has received training in working with pupils with behavioural difficulties, but it was his first year working in a ZEP school.

The observation session was of a lesson that covered two different subjects – maths (fractions, addition and division) and literacy (the outcomes of World War II). The boy being observed, during the first ten minutes of the lesson, was trying to draw the attention of the teacher, but unsuccessfully. The teacher was trying to remind the pupils what they had been learning the previous hour and explaining the tasks that they had to do.

Then, the pupils had to work in pairs on the tasks set out in their books. The boy being observed refused to work with the boy next to him and kept disrupting the rest of the pupils in his group. The teacher asked him to come to his desk so that the rest of the pupils could work without disruption and he then worked through all his tasks with the teacher. He seemed to be concentrating fully. This lasted for five minutes. The pupil then had to work by himself while the teacher approached the other pupils and checked their work, providing support where this was needed. As soon as the teacher left the boy's desk, however, he got up and was wandering around in the classroom for the whole time the teacher was providing support to the others.

The second part of the lesson was about the consequences of World War II. This was also a continuation from a lesson the previous day and included three different tasks. The most important of these involved the pupils preparing and then making a short presentation about the consequences of World War II, including pictures and comments. The pupils worked in the groups of two or three that they had been in the previous day.

The boy being observed did not want to work with any of the other pupils, but he did prepare a presentation. He wanted to present last and the teacher allowed him to do so. The presentation was impressive as he had done some extensive research on the internet and found lots of pictures and a short video concerning the consequences of the war. He joined everything that he had found together and commented on each, creating a story. While the rest of the pupils worked in twos or threes and presented six to seven slides on the subject, this boy had worked by himself and created a ten-slide presentation. All the pupils in the classroom applauded at the end and the boy felt really proud of his work.

The teacher, though he had not provided the boy with a lot of individual support, seemed aware of his talents with the computer and allowed him to help other pupils during their presentations. For the rest of the lesson, the boy did not cause any problems in the classroom, but, instead, seemed to enjoy the lesson – especially when the teacher presented a video and they had to talk about it. After five minutes, the bell sounded and the pupils had to go out for break. The boy approached the teacher and told him that he would like to do another task like the one they had just done in the lesson and seemed to seek his teacher's appraisal of his efforts. The teacher looked very understanding and genuinely said that he was impressed.

In the interview, the teacher mentioned that this particular boy seeks attention in the classroom because he does not receive any at home. He seemed to have a deep understanding of the boy's home situation and showed empathy for his actions in the classroom. He explained that the situation at home is very difficult – the boy is generally

neglected and has experienced violence between his parents – and sees it as being the reason for his behaviour in school.

Observation B5: Literacy

Teacher: Female (ee), 16 years working as a teacher, 2 years working in School B

Number of pupils: 20

Pupil: Boy, Grade A, Romanian, presenting with BESD and language difficulties

The teacher had six years' experience and has always worked with pupils in Grade A. In this observation, the lesson was on literacy and the pupils were around six years old.

The pupil with BESD who was to be the subject of the observation was a Romanian boy who was six years old. He sat alone at a desk located at the front of the classroom. The teacher and SEN teacher described the boy as bright, but with very immature social skills and challenging behaviour. She also mentioned that he has a tendency to cause dangerous situations and needs constant attention, plus some language difficulties. The boy had not been officially diagnosed as having behavioural difficulties at that time, but the school had filed a request to the EPD for an assessment and official identification of his needs.

The lesson started like a play in a theatre as the teacher came into the class with a puppet and a story. After a short introduction, she explained the targets of the lesson and what she expected from the pupils. She worked on the board and wrote some phrases that she then hid with cards and pictures. With the help of the puppet, she introduced various different activities, the aim of which was to deliver the main learning objectives – to practise the sounds of different syllables containing the letter 'k' and combinations of different vowels with the syllables, as well as reading.

In her lesson plan, the teacher had included nine different tasks:

- mixing up sentences and asking the pupils to put them together in the right order and read them
- covering words in the text in their books with different words, producing sentences with new meanings (the text in their books was also in the form of a big A0-size poster, attached to the board)
- creating a picture story
- a game in which the pupils had to name animals, foods and other things starting with or containing the letter 'k' and write them down
- singing a song/rhyme relating to the passage and practising syllables containing the sound 'k'
- matching pictures and words
- looking for 'και' (and) in sentences
- a 'word hunt trail' in the classroom – the pupils having to find words that were hidden in different places in the classroom.

The ninth activity was a game of bingo, to revise what the pupils had been taught. The teacher distributed bingo cards to the pupils that had words from the passage they had been working on in their books in place of the usual numbers. Then, the teacher brought out a bag containing little individual cards, each with one of the words on it, and she drew them in turn, randomly, from the bag, the students ticking them off on their bingo cards as she did so. The pupils were so engaged with this and the previous activities that the class ended before they knew it.

Even though the activities were suitable for any level and addressed the needs of all the pupils in the classroom, the teacher provided additional individual support and encouragement to the boy who was described as presenting with BESD. The boy responded well to this and the lesson had very positive outcomes.

At the end of the lesson, the boy asked the teacher if he was good and if he would receive a sticker on his progress chart- ‘achievement ladder’. There were progress charts for each pupil on the display board and an ‘achievement ladder’, each with a photo and individual learning and behaviour targets underneath. The pupils seemed to value this a lot: having the chart to record progress or getting stickers when they’d done well. The teacher reported that, first graders like pictures and interactive lessons. They cannot sit for 80 minutes lesson which is delivered in a traditional way. Moreover the teacher added that having a pupil with difficulties in socialising and in establishing relationships with peers, requires a lot of planning and the teacher has to be resourceful:

Working with first grade pupils it takes a lot of energy and planning, but having worked with first graders for many years enabled me to expand my understanding of what it takes to gain and maintain pupils’ attention and motivation. However working with this pupil... this is not enough. ... he needs to be kept busy with challenging activities and to be constantly encouraged to work with other children... it is an everyday struggle at school and hard work at home- in terms of planning. (ee)

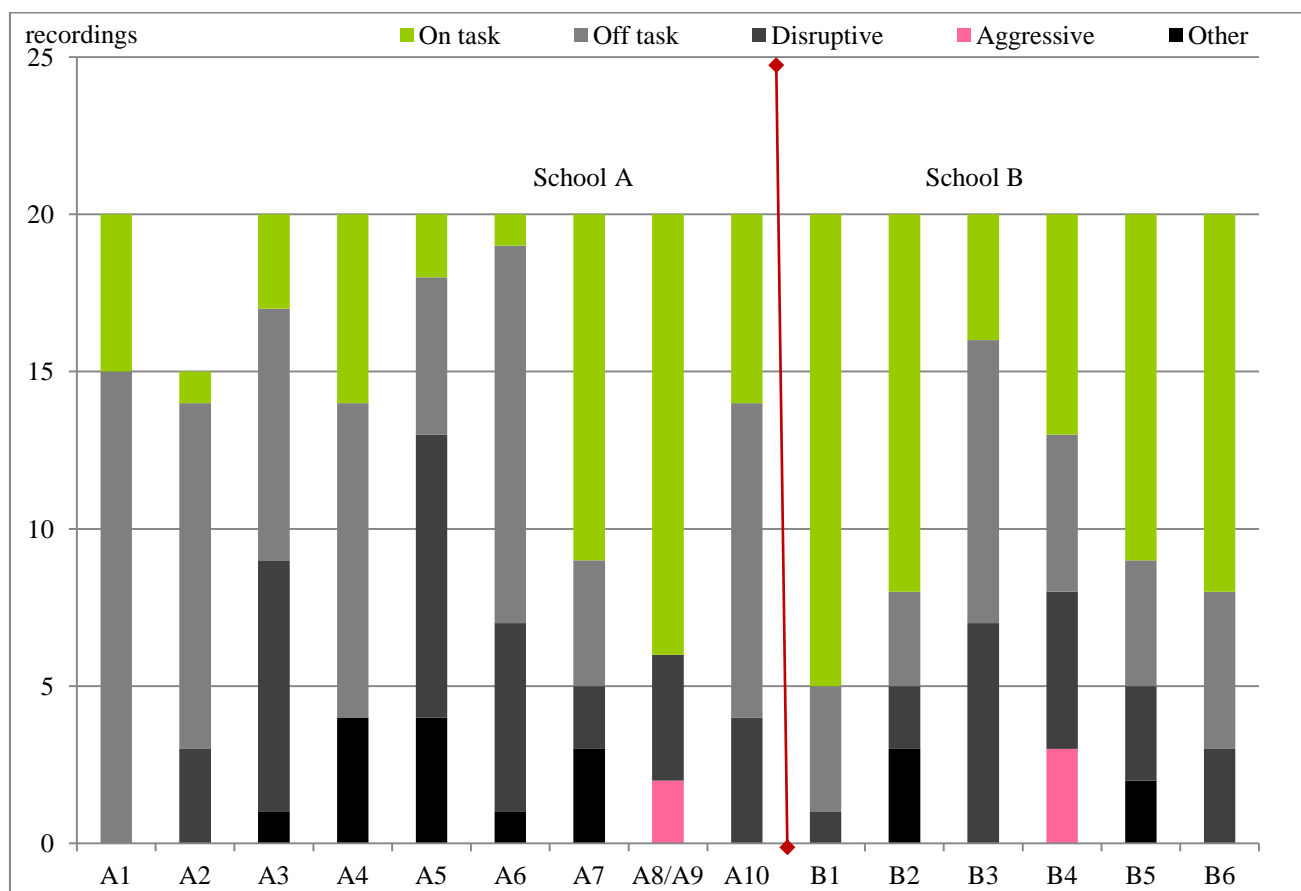
4.4.5.4 Overview of classroom practice

The observations provided a wealth of descriptive data concerning different aspects of the work that is taking place in the classroom as well as features related to the learning environment. They helped, as mentioned earlier in this chapter to direct also interviews in the aspects of lessons and to see how teachers worked with pupils presenting with BESD in the classrooms. In addition, the structured section of the observation form (Appendix 7-Part B, Section A) enabled an overall picture of pupils’ behaviour and engagement in tasks and the practices of the teachers during lessons.

All the recordings that were collected during observations, through ‘partial-interval’ recording method, were transferred onto Excel tables and analysed. A set of recordings was collected for each school which included information concerning teachers’ actions during lessons as well as the pupils’ behaviour. There were 295 recordings (175 for School A and 120 for School B), for pupils and 295 for teachers. These data is presented in Charts 6 and 7. These two charts helped to create a picture of how the each lesson was delivered, what choices teachers made and how pupils were progressing. Also the data presented in the two charts helped to develop the overall picture of the lessons observed in both schools and enabled a conclusions to be drawn.

Chart 6 shows the overall picture of pupil’s behaviour and engagement during the observations for both schools. Each bar in the chart represents 80-minute observation and 20 recordings for each observation for the pupil presenting with BESD:

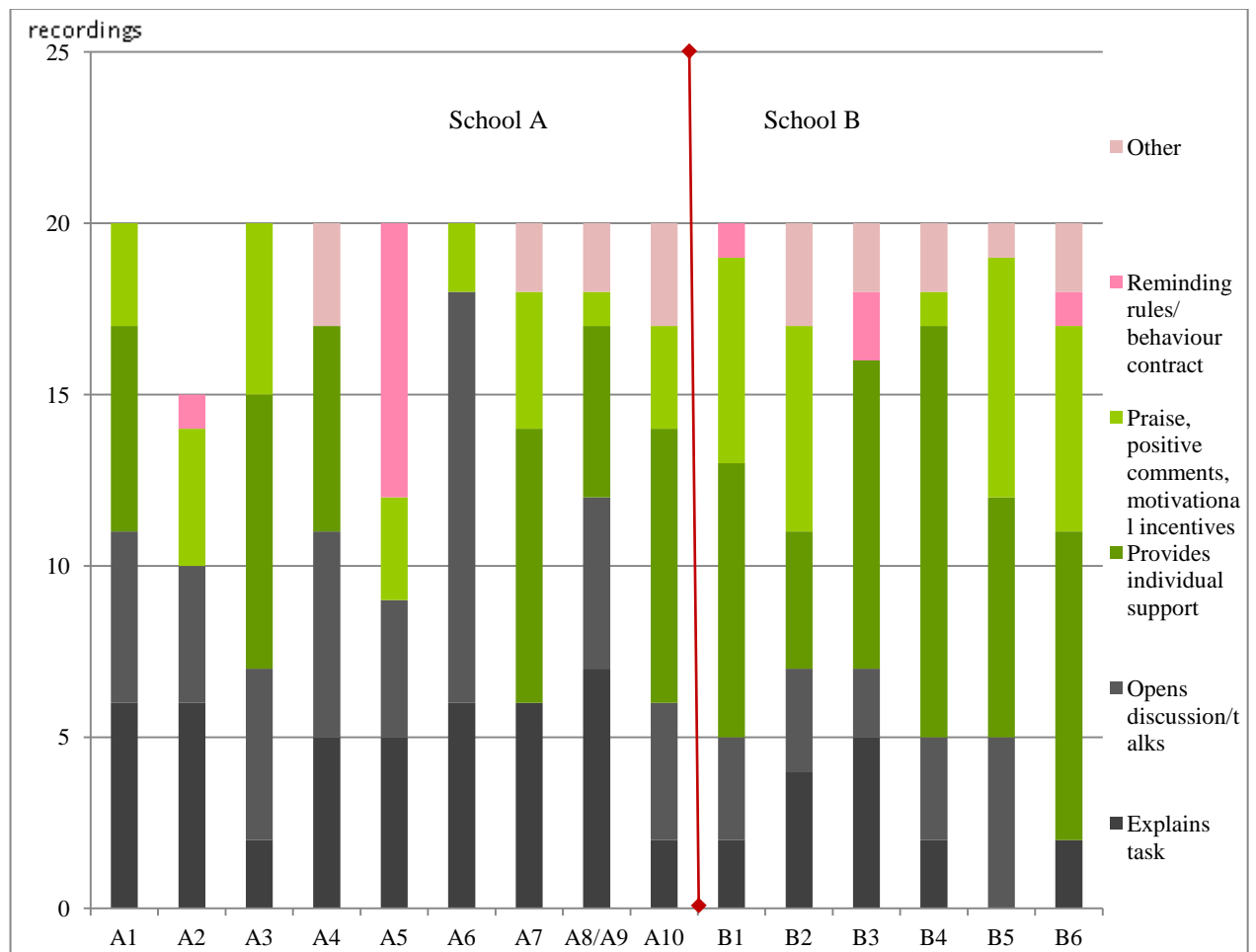
Chart 6: Behaviour of pupils with BESD



This chart shows that, for a considerable amount of time during the observation sessions, the pupils with BESD were off task and disruptive (see the dark and mid-grey shaded areas in the chart). According to the data, in 162 (off task = 105, disruptive = 57) of the 295 observation recordings made in both schools, pupils appeared to be off task and disruptive (that is approximately 54.92% of the observation sessions). At the same time, though, in 110 cases (37.29%), pupils appear to be ‘on task’- engaging in classroom activities set by the teacher. Aggressive behaviour was also observed in 1.69% of the observations (only in observation A8 and B4).

Comparing the results for the two schools, it can be seen that the pupils with BESD in School A engaged less with the activities during lessons than did the pupils with BESD in School B. In 2 out of 10 of the observation sessions in School A, the pupils were on task for most of the lesson (A7, A8/A9), but, in School B, the pupils with BESD were on task in 4 out of 6 of the sessions (B1, B2, B5, B6). In order to have a clear picture of what was happening in the classroom, it is important to compare these findings with teachers' actions during lessons. Chart 7 gives an overall picture of the situation.

Chart 7: Teacher's actions during lessons



Some of the teachers observed made significant efforts to engage pupils in tasks such as for example by a constant rotation of lesson tasks, delivering activities which required interaction between pupils and teachers and pupils with their peers. Teachers in three cases were seen to use praise a lot and to provide encouragement as well as to providing pupils with a great deal of individual support. According to the findings of observations in 111 observation recordings out of 295 teachers were recorded 'explaining tasks' and 'opening discussion' (60 and 61 recordings for Schools A and B respectively, shown by the dark and mid-grey shaded areas in Chart 7).

Moreover a considerable number of the recordings made concerned providing encouragement, praise and using a rewarding system (School A=25, School B=29), providing individual support (School A=41, School B=49) and reminding pupils with BESD of behaviour rules (see the dark green and lighter green shaded areas in Chart 7) such as for example the '*individual code of good behaviour*'. The latter was observed mainly in School A, since the school has clearer policy in terms of concerning behaviour (School A=9, School B=4). Teachers in School B employed praising and rewarding system across all the lessons-observed, whilst in School A the teachers were seen mostly explaining tasks and talking(see also Appendix 12).

4.5 Summary

The findings as reported in this chapter bring together the views of the participants concerning different aspects of school practice when working with pupils with BESD as well as reflections on what was observed in the classrooms during the course of

observations. Further analysis and discussion in Chapter 5 will help us to unravel what these findings have to tell us and point to some final conclusions.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Introduction

From findings to discussion

The aim of the previous chapter was to record and present systematically the data that had been collected and analysed, as well as preserve an ‘audit trail’ (Robson, 2002:175) and provide evidence to support the conclusions of this study and their validity.

My first priority when I set out to conduct this study was to raise an issue that seems to have been neglected in Cypriot literature – how ‘good practice’ when working with pupils with BESD in school is perceived by practitioners. The perceptions and experiences of different stakeholders and the practices of teachers working with these pupils were investigated and observed, all of which offered valuable insights that have the potential to contribute to improving teaching practices generally.

The results of the study shed light on the research problem and other subsidiary related questions. In the process of this study issues were raised regarding the procedures in place to assess pupils’ difficulties and reach decisions regarding the provision of support, the involvement of and building of partnerships with external agencies, the people involved in the school and working with these pupils and teachers’ understanding and knowledge of and training pertaining to BESD and classroom practices.

All these issues are discussed here with reference to the key literature highlighted in Chapter 2 and other texts relevant to this study. Some of the key aspects of this study which were raised in the process of discussing perceptions of good practice and classroom practices are:

- participants awareness of BESD
- the populations of the two schools – the pupils and their families
- the processes of identification, assessment and decisions regarding what support is to be provided for pupils with BESD
- issues relating to teachers – their training, qualities, competences
- establishing multidisciplinary collaborations
- involvement of pupils' families
- whole-school approaches.

5.1 Teachers' understanding of BESD meaning assigned to 'good practice'

In transferring the term BESD in Cypriot context and examining views in relation to this term two issues were of concern: the transferability of the term from one educational context to another (as discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.10) and the existing, in the two schools, awareness of BESD given that this is a widely known term in English education context but not in Cypriot. Furthermore each one of the two issues was likely to affect the way participants understand aspects of good practice. That is because, as the review of literature suggests, the way BESD is defined and understood can be subjective, cannot be 'precisely defined' (Angelides: 2000:57), and also can vary from one culture to another (Winzer, 2005).

Participants in this study provided a wealth of views with regard to the BESD as well as to what they believed the underlying causes are. Surprisingly the fact that there is no solid definition provided by the Cypriot MOEC, did not prevent participants of this study from developing their own understanding of BESD and of how to deal with pupils presenting with these difficulties in their classrooms. Most importantly based on their knowledge and experiences they responded within their cultural and professional structures and expressed their views concerning to different aspects of good practice.

Participants associated BESD with challenging behaviour, work avoidance, emotional difficulties, immaturity, hyperactivity and disruptive behaviour (Chapter 4, Tables 9 and 10) and talked about persistence of these problems for long period of time. It was also pointed out that contributing factors are family and cultural background, language and learning difficulties as well as medical and school-related factors. All the descriptions provided are to some extent alike to those in the latest BESD guidance (DCSF, 2008) and are more detailed than the 1992 definition provided in Cypriot SEN circular (MOEC, 1992). Also the fact that participants most frequently reported family as a causal factor to BESD it can be argued that participants views reflect the fact that they work in schools located in a deprived area, in which there is a high concentration of people from the lower socio-economic strata living in poverty conditions, so their experience is of pupils having family problems. Their responses may also be influenced by the fact that the school works with the SWS and are aware of which families are receiving support (in School A, it is 11 and, in School B, it is 26) and the nature of problems within the families of these pupils.

From all descriptions provided in interviews it becomes evident that participants, especially teachers, were not only deeply concerned about pupils' behaviour but also about their education and social and emotional well-being. These concerns led them also to develop their understandings of good practice which alike those presented in the studies conducted by the EBD research team of the University of Birmingham (such as Daniels et al., 1998a; Daniels et al., 1998b; Cole et al., 1998; Cole, Visser and Daniels, 2001; Cole, 2001; Cole, Daniels and Visser, 2003; Daniels et al., 2003) and views of authors such as Blandford (2005), Visser (2005) and Cole and Knowles (2011).

According to the general views of participants in this study, good practice is where:

- there is careful planning and organisation of school practices,
- school is a motivating, encouraging and happy place for pupils
- there is respect of and attentiveness to individual traits, strengths and weaknesses
- curriculum celebrates diversity and individuality
- there is close collaboration and communication between those working with pupils.

A. PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING 'GOOD PRACTICE' AND EMERGING ISSUES

5.2 The pupils with BESD and their family backgrounds

One of the first tasks undertaken in the fieldwork study was that of identifying the relevant pupil population – that is, the pupils with BESD. It was necessary to know who these pupils in the two subject schools are in order to seek the teachers' and other professionals'

perceptions of good practice in relation to them. Without doing so, it would not have been possible to build a complete picture of the practices, the recipients of those practices, explore whether elements of good practice which have been discussed in Chapter 2 have a bearing in achieving such practice in the subject schools. It was the aim, too, to raise awareness of the shortcomings of the current practices. In other words, it is not possible to assess good practice in isolation from the pupils receiving it.

Concerning pupils presenting with BESD, the majority of participants in both Schools A and B reported issues relating to:

- the family
- the nature of pupil's difficulties.

It seems that participants in this study largely associated BESD with family deprivation – most believed that there were links between the problems in the family and the difficulties the pupils present with. Their general understanding of BESD had been shaped mainly by their teaching experience (participants, on average, had 14 years' experience) in ZEP and other schools rather than any official guidance or specific training.

In a similar way to Chazan et al. (1994), Cole et al. (1998) and Daniels et al.'s (1998a) studies, the interview data from this study revealed that a significant number of pupils attending Schools A and B have socially and financially deprived backgrounds. In addition, many of the families of the pupils also have other persistent problems, such as alcohol and drug abuse, domestic violence, unemployment and poor living conditions, leading to dysfunctional family relationships that, the teachers noted, affect the pupils' behaviour at

school. Moreover, participants in this study not only pointed out the association between family background and BESD but also expressed views that suggest the key to working effectively with pupils with BESD is to also work with their families.

In School A, BESD was also associated with Roma pupils. It was raised as a factor as 8 out of 10 of the pupils identified as presenting with BESD (for the observations) were Roma. This finding emerged during the research process and was a factor that I investigated further. There were only a few studies exploring issues related to the Roma community in Cyprus (Demetriou and Trimikliniotis, 2007; Trimikliniotis and Demetriou, 2009, 2009a; Spyrou, 2004). Trimikliniotis and Demetriou's (2009, 2009a) study focused mainly on the place of Roma in Cypriot society, their history and family, social and financial situation and reported the social exclusion and marginalisation the Roma community experiences and how it affects them in various aspect of their lives – including their education. It was found that family problems, together with the fact that the Roma is a marginalised and socially excluded community, not only adversely affect their education but also their general behaviour and emotional and social well-being. As Trimikliniotis and Demetriou (2009: 7) say, the Roma 'are by far the most deprived Cypriot citizens'. Most importantly, these authors highlight the low attainment of these pupils – an issue that was also highlighted by the participants in this study.

The interviews revealed, further, that not only were the Roma pupils' living conditions thought likely to have an impact on their behaviour and attitudes towards their education but also their parents' own poor educational backgrounds and lack of interest in education contribute to this outcome. The participants commented that the pupils' parents generally

have a lack of interest in the education of their children, little personal motivation for them to learn and a tendency to want for them to make an early exit from school.

A large number of pupils attending both Schools A and B come from families defined by their social and financial deprivation. Unlike School A, however the pupils in School B presenting with BESD were not Roma, but mainly Cypriots coming from deeply problematic family backgrounds – one of the parents being involved in criminal activities, drug and/or alcohol use, prostitution and domestic violence. The nature of the pupils' family backgrounds and the association made by participants between this and BESD seems to align with the work of Chazan et al. (1994), Jones (2008) and Dowling (2010), as well as the findings of WHO (2007), which also suggest links between problematic family backgrounds and BESD.

Participants in both schools, knowing so well the difficult family situations of their pupil populations, reported that, as a result, they have implemented various initiatives in order to address this and bring families into a closer relationship with the schools, so that they can work more effectively with the pupils – especially those with BESD. They also stressed, despite expressing deep concerns about the attitudes of parents towards the schools, the importance of establishing a good home–school partnerships and establishing lines of communication.

The teachers' responses concerning the characteristics of the pupils presenting with BESD and their families in relation to the efforts made by the schools to establish a partnership with them accord with the conclusion arrived at by Cole et al., (1998: 38) – to work effectively and support the learning of pupils with BESD, though difficult, it is necessary to

‘empathise and build relationships’. Indeed, the practices developed in both schools show not only the efforts they have made to bring the pupils’ families and the schools closer together but also convey their general philosophy as to the importance of working with parents to, together, provide the best support for the learning of the pupils.

5.3 Securing the provision of support for pupils with BESD

Guidance issued by the then Department for Education and Skills in England explains that good practice can take many forms and leaves it open for any school or other institution to decide what procedures to use (DfES, 2001). In addition, among the triggers for intervention are the families’ or teachers’ concerns about those pupils who, despite receiving support during their early years in education, persistently demonstrate emotional and/or behavioural difficulties that do not show improvement (DfES, 2001).

Similarly, in Cyprus, the 113(I)/1999 law (MOEC, 1999) regarding the early detection of pupils’ needs suggests that anyone who works on a day-to-day basis with pupils should report ‘without delay’ those who show evidence of having SEN. In the preamble, operational terminology is used with regard to many aspects of the law, including a pupil with SEN’s presumed deficiencies (MOEC, 1999: Article 2.1):

A child having severe learning or special learning, functional, or adaptive difficulty that is due to physical (including sensual), intellectual or other cognitive or psychological deficiencies and, where it is needed, to receive special education and training.

Apart from Article 2.1 of the 113(I)/1999 law (MOEC, 1999) and the 1992 circular (MOEC, 1992), however, no further attention has been given to setting up a framework for identifying the needs of pupils who may present with BESD. Moreover, what the term

means remains rather confusing and, thus, putting the guidance offered by the 113 (I)/1999 law into practice becomes difficult, and identification is likely to be delayed as well as learning support for the child. Interestingly, not only does this law overlook the needs of pupils who may fall under the umbrella of BESD, but, additionally, it does not endeavour to set out what good practice would be for these pupils, apart from outlining a procedure for identifying and supporting pupils who are believed to have SEN.

The teachers gave clear accounts of the procedure that is followed when a child is identified with BESD (see Figure 5, Chapter 4). Comparing their information with the procedure outlined in the law, it seems that the teachers are, in the main, sufficiently informed about how this is done, but some were not.

In addition, the guidelines given in the 113(I) law (MOEC, 1999) only provide general information with regard to pupils whose needs are identified by it as ‘special needs’. It is not surprising, therefore, that the interviews with the teachers revealed some confusion with regard to what procedure should be followed as the needs of pupils who present with behavioural difficulties are set out in a rather confusing way in the official documents. For example, the definition given in the 1992 circular (MOEC, 1992) is ‘behavioural disorders’, while in the 113(I) law it is ‘psychological deficiencies’. According to what was said by teachers during interviews, they tend to act according to their own understanding and knowledge. That, apart from three cases, the pupils the teachers identified as having BESD to be the subjects of the observation sessions were aged from 6 to 12 and had not yet received a statement of needs, is an indication of the existing confusion and the delays that occur in terms of addressing and meeting the needs of these pupils.

In addition to explaining the steps that they follow when it comes to identifying a child with suspected BESD in their classrooms, the teachers were also asked what their views were on this procedure. The majority of the responses were, to a certain extent, negative. They expressed their dissatisfaction and disappointment with the procedure and consistently described it as bureaucratic and time-consuming, feeling that it did not contribute to best practice. The timescale for the whole procedure was said to take from 5 months in the best case to up to 15 months in the worst case. This finding accords with various studies, including also the recent National Report on Inclusive Education (MOEC, 2008) which support that the Cypriot educational system is highly centralised and bureaucratic (e.g. Phtiaka, 2000; Angelides and Vrasidas, 2004; Hoplaros, 2004; Loizidou et al., 2007; MOEC, 2008).

The application of the 113 (I)/1999 law presents, too, a weakness concerning the early detection and identification and provision of learning support to those cases of pupils presenting with SEN (Hoplaros, 2004). Pupils with BESD present a category of SEN which has not been defined by the educational authorities and this adds a degree of difficulty when it comes to assessing cases of pupils presenting with these difficulties (Angelides and Vrasidas, 2004). A shortcoming, well presented by the participants during interviews and also observed in action, is that pupils presenting with these difficulties lack appropriate learning support and their fate in school depends heavily on teachers' experience of dealing with BESD and their attitudes.

Having said this, participants expressed their concerns, too, about the fact that this delay of delivering the assessment procedure and reaching decision for support for pupils presenting

with BESD, results in situations where they have pupils in their classrooms whom they do not feel they are adequately trained to provide learning support. Moreover in most of the cases until schools and thus teachers receive an official identification of pupils' difficulties and a plan is put in place for the provision of appropriate support, pupils are not appropriately supported – there were cases – in this study where pupils were observed being marginalised and left out from work that is done in the classroom and teachers appeared to lack confidence in developing an inclusive classroom ethos. In other words, teachers' ability to work effectively with pupils presenting with BESD depends considerably on the outcomes of the assessment procedure and the decision of the district committee and the ILP that is set up for the pupils, but it takes too long so they have to do the best they can in the meanwhile. Thus, for some time, the nature of the support that is provided to the pupils is mainly the result of the teachers' understanding of the pupils' needs, initiatives and experience in working with pupils with BESD.

The views of the participants agree with those expressed in Hoplaros' (2004) report on the implementation of the 113(I) law for the identification and provision of support for pupils with SEN. According to Hoplaros, there were several weaknesses to the implementation of the 113(I) law, mainly deriving from how the provisions of the law are interpreted by those applying it and their workloads. Hoplaros (2004) reported the difficulty the professionals in the EPD and district committees had in seeing all the cases identified with SEN early as the most important weakness and attributed this to the large number of cases that need to be assessed, but there was also, especially, the weakness of the various departments of the MOEC not responding within the required time. Most importantly, Hoplaros (2004) highlighted that completing the procedure was hampered by the bureaucracy instituted by

the law –finding which comes in line with conclusions of studies such as that of Angelides and Vrasidas (2004) and Loizidou et al. (2007). A similar statement was made in the ‘National report on education’ (MOEC, 2008: 34). This report points out that the law has weaknesses and so ‘an appraisal and improvement’ is required.

In conclusion, it can be seen that the time taken to complete the assessment procedure and, as a result, the lack, in the meanwhile, of a clear understanding of pupils’ needs were the main reasons for teachers expressing the view that it is very difficult to work effectively with pupils in the classroom. It would therefore seem that it is necessary for this procedure to be reviewed and updated.

5.4 Working with pupils with BESD

5.4.1 Relevance of teachers’ training

During the early stages of data collection process it was expected that since both schools were part of the ZEP schools programme, teachers would have received relevant training. That is because, according to Papadopoulos’ (2003a) proposed plan for the ‘ZEP schools programme’, training was essential for teachers who would be appointed to work in ZEP schools. In addition among the recommendations made in Loizidou et al’s (2007) study was that of teacher training. Teachers and those working in ZEP schools, as Loizidou et al., (2007) suggested, should receive training at the beginning of the year and also throughout the year if possible. Nevertheless whilst the data collection process of this study was in progress, it became evident that participants lacked relevant training. From 22 interview participants only 3 stated that they had received an in-service training. To this it must be added that most teachers were working in the schools for more than two years without being

trained prior to their appointment to work there, and without any plan in place for professional development courses. These findings are in agreement with other Cypriot studies which suggest insufficiencies in the way the in-service training is delivered and lack of relevant training meticulously planned to meet the teachers' needs (Hoplaros, 2004; Loizidou et al., 2007; Karagiorgi and Symeou, 2007; 2008; MOEC, 2008; Symeou et al., 2009).

When the teachers were asked to say whether or not they had received any form of training (such as seminars organised by the Pedagogical Institute or training provided at their schools by specialist staff, workshops or an experience exchange) relating to teaching in ZEP schools or teaching pupils with BESD or the complexities of teaching Roma pupils and those whose first language is not Greek or pupils coming from troubled homes, they said that they had not. The teachers reported that they had received an in-service training seminar, as part of a research project, at the beginning of 2009, but they did not find it relevant to their work. The seminar to which they referred was implemented between February and April 2009, the aim of which was to enhance teachers' knowledge of Roma history and culture, intercultural education, curriculum development and classroom management. This seminar was commissioned by INSETRom (In-service Training for Roma Inclusion) and conducted by Symeou et al. (2009). Participants' views in this study regarding the effectiveness of this course echo those of Symeou et al (2009) – although the seminar was helpful, it was not adequate in addressing the concerns of teachers about how to ensure the inclusion of Roma pupils or how to work with them more effectively within an inclusive school ethos.

Also the views of participants, of school A, about the lack of sufficient training, in relation to Roma, accord with recommendations made by Symeou et al., (2009) and Symeou, Luciak, and Gobbo (2009a) who highlighted the need for teachers to know about their pupil's culture, learning needs and styles –to understand the Roma history and cultural and traditional values in order to help Roma pupils to reach their full potential in school.

Furthermore, according to the views of participants of both schools, teachers come across a rather complex and challenging situation in ZEP schools –they work with various different cases requiring different approaches for which they feel they are not sufficiently trained. Factors such as language, family situation, cultural and social status of parents have a considerable effect on pupils' behaviour and thus a training which focuses on these factors would help those working with pupils presenting with BESD to develop an understanding of why pupils behave the way they behave and what lies beneath their behaviours. Participants also expressed the view that a training would prepare them to work with pupils more effectively, as it could potentially help them to improve the quality of teaching and learning process. These views accord with the argument of Visser (see 2003: 37 and 45).

Visser (2003) stated that training is not solely about acquiring specialist subject knowledge and skills. Rather, it facilitates teachers' understanding and helps them to look beyond the external behaviour of their pupils (Visser, 2003).

The problems existing in the families of pupils attending the two schools, as presented in Chapter 4, indicate the need for professional development courses for teachers and other school staff working with pupils, planned and delivered systematically based on local needs. Such courses would broaden teachers' understanding and awareness –especially since recent

Cypriot reports, issued by the SWS (2004; 2009; 2010) provide evidence that suggests increasing numbers of family deprivation, domestic violence and of children being victims of family violence.

The overwhelming interview findings of this study suggest that participants, although considered training as a factor which would contribute to develop good practice, were not sufficiently trained to work with pupils presenting with BESD (including pupils identified as Roma). Also observation findings confirm that teachers are not confident enough when working with pupils due to the lack of appropriate training and do not have a plan for how to work with pupils presenting with BESD. In most of the cases, the lessons were traditionally delivered, mainly through instruction, without allowing the time and space for pupils to discover new knowledge. Moreover the pupils who were pointed out for observations were seen in many cases isolated from classroom activities or grouped with pupils with similar characteristics and the teachers' efforts to include them in lessons were minimal. This finding was discussed by Royer (2005) who stressed the link between pre-service and in-service training with classroom effectiveness when working with pupils with BESD.

5.4.2 Support partnerships in the subject schools

In Chapter 2, key government texts in England guiding good practice in schools, such as the Elton report (DES, 1989) and code of practice (DfES, 2001), research projects (Cole et al., 1998; Daniels et al., 1998a; Cole et al., 2001), as well as Cypriot legislative documents (MOEC, 1999), indicate aspects of work that can be achieved in partnership with external agencies. These texts cover good practice in schools relating to the learning of pupils from

the moment that they are thought to have SEN to the time that a decision is reached with regard to the provision of support and then, onwards, monitoring progress across all phases of their learning. Thus, the discussion now turns to the participants' experience and perceptions relating to the work of other professionals in the school.

First, the evidence from the interviews with teachers and associated professionals in both Schools A and B was that a range of partners, including EPs, staff from the SEN department, TAs, SEN teachers, interpreters and Turkish Cypriot teachers, were involved and worked jointly with them. In addition, reference was made to local bodies working in partnership with the school, including the SWS and children's homes for those pupils whose families' difficulties have led to the authorities taking on their care. Also, the local police were mentioned to have been involved when there had been severe problems or to provide traffic awareness sessions to pupils. Some other local bodies, such as the Greek Orthodox Church, the Cyprus Athletic Organisation (KOA) and Athletics for All, were mentioned as offering both voluntary support and free after-school activities for pupils.

With regard to the work of these people in the school, the teachers were asked about their experiences of the multidisciplinary partnerships that had been built at their schools. They were asked to say whether or not working in partnership with these professionals was adequate and effective in addressing difficulties and problems at the time that they emerged and across all phases of working with a pupil who presents with BESD.

All the responses were gathered and found to be of three main types – yes, no or yes, but need to be improved – with some further elaboration on these. It seems that there was a general agreement among the participants – they perceived the joint work with these

partners to be efficacious. Most of them spoke of a close collaboration between these disciplines, explaining that much of what had been accomplished at school level was because they had direct access to these different professionals. In this regard, it helped that the two subject schools operate under the Priority Education Policy as part of the ZEP schools scheme. Such comments agree with the assertion supported in the literature review regarding the potential of such collaborations in schools.

There were also some rather negative responses that cannot be dismissed, however, such as one from a teacher who explained that, although such partnership work is built on the grounds of there being a substantial and quick response to the daily needs of pupils, teachers and schools, there are hardly any professionals who collaborate like this systematically. Another teacher also seemed to be disappointed with the nature of the existing collaborations. This teacher argued that such professionals ‘do not exist in school’ (o), expressing a more wide-ranging view that they do not visit as often as they should and, when they are invited by the school to visit and work on certain cases, their response is not as prompt as the teacher would like them to be. The teachers also expressed the belief that partnerships entail the potential to offer substantial teamwork to the schools, but the role of these professionals needed to be reviewed in terms of the quality and content of their contributions as it was stated that this was insufficient. Similar findings were discussed by Cole et al., (1998), Daniels et al., (1998a). Daniels et al., (1998a:71) for example following the findings of their study examining good practice in mainstream schools pointed out that while different professionals should work for the benefit of the child, this rarely was the case.

Participants in this study although thoroughly described the work of different professionals and how this contributes or not to enhancing good practice, they most commonly talked about the work that is carried out when working together with the EP, SWS officers and SEN teachers.

5.4.2.1 Working with EPs

While the accounts of the teachers pertaining to working in partnership with different professions in general were positive and regarded as efficient, the involvement of EPs seemed to be of recurring concern to them. The teachers from both schools spoke about the different aspects of the service that EPs offer to schools – consultation, assessment, planning and application of interventions, joint work with teachers if required – and regarded these as extensive, but in need of further review. Their work is carried out at school, child, family and district committee levels across all stages of the pupils’ education and EPs are perceived as playing a key role during the application of the procedure for assessing and securing provision for individual, in working with the pupils, assessing and monitoring progress, as well as keeping teachers and families updated.

The teachers’ responses suggest that, generally, when the school and teachers work closely with the EP, this results in substantial work at classroom level between pupil and teacher and positive outcomes in terms of behaviour and response to interventions. They also, in the main, responded positively (see Chapter 4, Table 11) to a direct question as to the effectiveness of partnership work in schools, but some of them considered the support they receive from the EPs to be inadequate (for instance, ss, o, pp, rr). So, for example, some made statements such as, ‘I called the EP, but I am still waiting’ or ‘I explained in detail his

behavioural difficulties, but I did not get any considerable support from her visit' and 'generally it works satisfactorily'. This findings accord with findings of Cole et al. (1998) and Daniels et al (1998a) who suggested that collaboration between professionals rarely was seen working in the schools due to reasons such as 'finance, time and inclination' (Daniels et al., 1998a: 72).

On the basis of the data collected in the interviews, it may be that the position and role of the person being interviewed influenced their views to some extent. The headteachers, ZEP coordinator and SEN teachers tended to hold more positive views of EPs than did the teachers. This could perhaps be explained by the fact that the teachers have a more demanding role to play as they work directly with these pupils and are committed to their learning.

Finally, the teachers often made recommendations, such as increasing the time the EPs spent in school – in terms of the number of hours allocated and making the visits more regular – and reflecting on practices with them. Similar recommendations were made by Loizidou et al. (2007: 72), who suggested the appointment of one EP per ZEP or per school year group.

5.4.2.2 Working with the SWS

The participants seemed to generally appreciate the work of the SWS, but most of them suggested that there should be a review of its role in school. That is because, as one of the headteachers argued, there are pupils whose needs require immediate action, but it takes time for the SWS to respond. It was also mentioned that in cases where families are already receiving benefits from the SWS, it is slower in responding than in other cases.

The situation is clearly problematic. One headteacher attributed delays in the response of the SWS to the fact that it is overwhelmed by its workload of cases. One other teacher spoke of the support provided by the SWS as being neither substantial nor effective and recommended that an SWS officer visit the school on a daily basis to deal with situations.

It might be assumed that the systems and structures in place have been created to enable collaboration between different professionals, but some factors interfere with their decisiveness and promptness of action. That this occurs explains the teachers' ambivalence regarding how effective the collaboration between different professionals is. The current partnership between the SWS and the schools puts the schools in a rather difficult position as it involves a huge amount of time and effort on the teachers' part to deal with individual cases of pupils when the support from the appropriate professionals is not available.

5.4.2.3 The SEN unit in School B: contribution to good practice

Following the collection of data from School A, the next step was to collect data from school B. Soon after the data collection process began, I realised that the school was working closely with the SEN Teacher and the two TAs for providing learning support to an alternative of classroom setting. Many of the participants in this study were constantly referring to the role of SEN Unit and the nature of support provided to pupils presenting with BESD. The views of participants concerning the role of SEN Unit, suggest that this form of provision offered to pupils with SEN according to the provisions of the 113 (I)/1999 (MOEC, 1999), generally contributes to working effectively with pupils presenting with SEN. According to the views of participants in School B, pupils presenting with BESD were benefiting from the service offered through the SEN Unit. As this was a new

issue in this study further reading let to an understanding of how the SEN Unit works, what form of support is provided to pupils who are registered to it and its effectiveness.

Important circulars issued by the Cypriot MOEC (MOEC, 2001; 2008) and the 113 (I)/1999 SEN law (MOEC, 1999) emphasise the commitment to education that is accessible to and inclusive of all pupils, regardless of their needs. Within this objective, the majority of pupils with SEN in Cyprus are educated in mainstream classes, unless their medical, educational or other needs require more advanced provision of support and other staff to help them achieve their potential (MOEC, 1999, 2001).

SEN units are integrated classroom settings housed in a school building with the necessary facilities and specialist teachers, such as SEN teachers and SEN TAs, or visiting professionals to provide the necessary additional support for their pupils. The pupils who are registered in SEN units are usually assigned to a mainstream classroom based on their age level and can join integrated lessons and events in the school, but their educational needs are met in the SEN units where necessary adjustments are made so as to work effectively with pupils.

The same law recognises that among pupils whose needs may be addressed in SEN units are those with behaviour-related difficulties. Little evidence has been found, however, that explores the contribution SEN units can make to working effectively with pupils with BESD. Tryfonos (2006) examined this and the findings from interviews conducted for that study suggest that the role the units play is to work on a one-to-one basis with the pupils with SEN. The study also showed that, despite the efforts to address the needs of pupils with

BESD in these units, pupils experience some form of marginalisation from their peers and their teachers.

In addition, a study by Angelides and Michailidou (2007) also arrives at similar conclusions. Its key findings suggest that the way pupils with SEN are integrated in SEN units creates a problematic situation, the outcomes of which are reflected in children attending them. According to vignettes presented by the authors of this study, children seem to experience marginalisation from not only peers but also the way integration takes place, how their teachers attempt to achieve this. A characteristic example given in the study is the phrase used by a teacher who sent a pupil to the school's unit after finishing a drawing in an arts lesson: 'if you've finished, go to your classroom' (Angelides and Michailidou, 2007: 90).

Accounts from participants in the present study, suggest similar attitudes. For example, some teachers associate the work of the unit with relieving them of the 'burden' of pupils with BESD by removing the 'problems' from their classrooms. This can be regarded as discriminatory. It must also be borne in mind, however, that such views reflect feelings of anxiety, stress and perhaps annoyance as the behaviour of pupils with BESD does, on many occasions, interfere with the smooth running of the classroom, as well as challenging the lesson planning, authority and professional efficacy of teachers.

Little was found in the literature relating to how teachers perceive the role of SEN units, how they enhance good practice with pupils with BESD or how their overall application in schools is perceived. The views of the teachers and the role they assigned to the SEN unit and the staff do concur, however, with the findings of a study by Koutrouba, Vambakari and Steliou (2006). In their study, the teachers seemed to strongly believe that the presence of

SEN pupils in the mainstream classroom had a negative effect on the teaching and learning process. Koutrouba et al. (2006: 386) argued that:

students with severe mental retardation and visual impairment must be educated in special schools ..., while students with motor, hearing, emotional and behavioural problems could follow mainstream education in regular schools so long as extra supportive teaching and equipment were provided in special units/classes.

Although the views of participants of School B reported that the work of the SEN unit is imperative for addressing the needs of pupils with BESD, it seems that there are some misunderstandings concerning the role of the unit in that school. Teachers who said that the unit is important also commented that they considered it to be a place where pupils with BESD would be sent if any problem emerged in the classroom. This finding seems to be in agreement with Royer (2005:379) who pointed out that very often teachers do not have ‘a crisis intervention plan or procedure to rely on when things start to go wrong’. Similarly in this case the solution, when a teacher was facing a challenge due to the behaviour of a pupil, was to send the child in the SEN Unit. The SEN teacher and SEN TA confirmed this as they mentioned that some teachers do not seem to understand that the role of the unit is not for such a purpose. As it was also stated, teachers and SEN unit staff should work together in order to provide effectively for these pupils.

It seems also that although teachers considered SEN Unit as an exemplar of good practice in their schools, this might not be the cases as pupils often sent to the Unit due to their behaviour, experience a form of labelling, exclusion from classroom activities and marginalisation. This conclusion can be confirmed by the study of Angelides and Michaelidou (2007).

Both the SEN teacher and the SEN TA, as Angelides and Michelidou's (2007) study found, pupils attending the unit experience marginalisation by both their peers and their teachers, who make them feel unwanted. In order to stop this from continuing, the headteachers of School B had decided on a programme for raising awareness among pupils and teachers in the school concerning the role of the unit.

5.4.3 Home-school partnerships – their contribution to good practice

Most participants in both schools described home-school links by mainly discussing two aspects of it:

- the importance of fostering home and school partnership in order to work effectively with pupils presenting with BESD
- the impact of family problems on child's behaviour

Concerning these two aspects, even though the impact of family on the emotional and behavioural development of a child cannot be denied (see DES, 1989; Greenhalgh, 1994; Cole et al., 1998; Cole and Knowles, 2011) and although consequences can arise from parental problems (Chazan et al., 1994; Cole et al., 1998; NASUWT, 2006; WHO, 2007; Jones, 2008; SWS, 2009; Cole and Knowles, 2011), participants stressed the importance of establishing and maintaining a positive partnership between parents and school based on effective communication and positive attitudes. The general philosophy of both schools was to bridge the gap between home and school, bring parents closer to school and, thus, encourage them to take an active role in their child's learning. Based on the views of

participants it can be claimed that good practice with pupils presenting with BESD was associated by participants with the efforts of the two schools to establish such partnership.

The overwhelming majority of participants described initiatives that the two schools developed to encourage this partnership and problems in the families of pupils. The problems reported had been also held, by participants, responsible for shaping the outcomes of initiatives as well as for having a negative effect in sustaining a long-term and systematic home-school collaboration –a view that has been highlighted in number of studies in the past (DES, 1989; Chazan et al., 1994; NASUWT, 2006).

For example a significant number of parents of pupils attending School A are Roma. Even though the law making education compulsory (MOEC, 2003b), Roma parents do not systematically enrol their children in school unless they are forced to do so by the schools or educational authorities (also reported in the studies of Demetriou and Trimikliniotis, 2007; Symeou; 2007; Symeou et al., 2009). Also, there are parents who do not ensure that their children attend regularly and, surprisingly, they do not seem to be regarded as violating the law (Symeou et al., 2009). This ‘elasticity’ in the application of the law seems to have reinforced the negative attitude of Roma families towards the schooling of their children and means it is left to the schools to tackle the problems of irregular attendance. Through the initiatives developed, as stated by participants, it was hoped the attendance of pupils would improve.

The headteacher of School A attributed the BESD of Roma pupils as being due, to some extent, to the attitude of parents towards their children’s schooling as well as their generally negative attitudes towards the education system (also reported in the studies of Demetriou

and Trimikliniotis, 2007; Symeou, 2009). It was hoped, therefore, that by motivating the parents to bring their children to school, such negative attitudes would disappear.

In School A, a photograph exhibition and cookbook were put together, the aims of which were to not only strengthen the partnerships between the parents and school but also enable Roma and Cypriot parents to learn about each other's cultures (as there were Cypriot parents who wanted the Roma to be removed from the school to another setting). Also, evening classes were held to motivate parents to come in to school (since many of them were non native speakers, a good constructive solution was to offer them Greek language classes). As the headteacher and the two deputy headteachers of School A noted, they hoped that, by offering lessons to parents, the pupils would be able to see their parents coming in to school and actually sitting at desks and focusing on the course being offered and this, it was hoped, would have positive impacts on their own behaviour towards learning and schooling.

Moreover, the headteachers and teachers of School B and ZEP coordinator highlighted that broken family bonds, due to divorce or mixed marriages, as well as issues such as poverty, unemployment and general social deprivation, prevent parents from getting involved in the learning of their children. Similarly to School A, School B, developed several initiatives encouraging parents' collaboration with the school. An example of such initiatives was the school festival which was planned and organised in collaboration with parents. Whilst this initiative was regarded by participants as successful and very promising for future collaboration and for maintaining good home and school partnership, some concerns were also raised for its long-term effect.

Despite these initiatives, the teachers in general painted a rather negative picture of parents' involvement, stating that the vast majority of them continue to be distant and not really interested in their children's learning. They also seemed to believe that little progress has been made in bringing parents in to school and, although occasionally parents do come in, this is not in a systematic way.

In conclusion the views and concerns raised by participants with respect to parents' involvement in schools and the work that has been achieved by the two schools in establishing positive partnerships with parents offer a useful perspective of how could practices and initiatives developed by schools can foster positive attitudes. Regardless of family problems existing in pupils' backgrounds or not, it is always important for schools to devote time for planning activities that encourage parental involvement. Furthermore although progress in achieving the involvement of parents, it is always important to maintain the best possible relationship with them. The example of a mother, who even though did not speak the Greek language approached and thanked the teacher (through her daughter) for her son's progress is an example of how continuous effort on behalf of the teachers can have positive results.

This conclusion, drawn from interview findings, accords with the Chazan et al's (1994) view on school and parents collaboration, with recent guidelines provided by the DCSF (2008) and the discussion of Cole and Knowles (2011). For example Chazan et al., (1994) stated that:

parents, particularly those who are facing stresses of whatever kind in their own life need to feel a sense of agreed purpose if they are to become part of the process of helping their children.

Also Cole and Knowles (2011:203) point out that whatever the obstacles in parents' background it is always important to take an empathetic view as parents may have 'a long history of negative experiences'.

5.4.4 Whole-school practices and initiatives

Although the primary objectives of both the subject schools are mainly academic – to ensure that all pupils are able to access the curriculum, then address their learning needs and provide them with support – they acknowledge issues such as partnerships with the families, peer relationships and, most importantly, behavioural difficulties must not be overlooked. Consequently, they have been considered during the planning and application of their intervention programmes and this might be why the subject schools' key concepts seem to be mostly the same. Perhaps it might be assumed that it is because these key issues are embedded in the wider ZEP schools' philosophy. Indeed, as highlighted in Chapter 2, intervention programmes with shared objectives for schools located within the same zone or network are one of the characteristics of schools operating under the umbrella of the Priority Education Policy.

Despite this, and given the overall responses of the teachers regarding the nature of the student populations, it was perhaps expected that the needs of pupils attending School A would call for more radical whole-school programmes to promote positive behaviour than would be the case in School B. Indeed, it has done so because of issues such as prejudice, conflict between pupils and general discriminatory attitudes in School A mirror, to some extent, the sociopolitical issues of the area in general. For instance, the relationships between the Turkish and Cypriot communities have been complicated since the 1974

troubles and the occupation by the Turkish of 35% of the Cypriots' land, plus the fact that, since the 1960 constitution, the majority of those in the Roma community are deemed to be part of the Turkish community (Demetriou and Trimikliniotis, 2006). Given these factors, Cypriots are likely to think of the Roma as being part of the Turkish community and, thus, Cypriots residing in the same area as the Roma do not have much to do with them (Demetriou and Trimikliniotis, 2006).

It is worth noting here one of the interventions that was planned and implemented by School A. It initially started as a small initiative taken by the music teacher, but it progressed and became a whole-school programme with successful outcomes. Its aim was to motivate pupils and develop a sense of ownership of learning and knowledge, create lifetime experiences and bring the two main ethnic communities of the school closer together. According to the accounts of participants from School A, it was the fact that the pupils developed something new through an experience extending beyond the classroom and the school's doors and their personalities rather than their origins or learning that meant it was valued. It resulted in changes of behaviour, especially for those pupils with severe behavioural difficulties, during the initiative, but also stimulated their motivation and engagement when they were back in the classroom.

School B initiated programmes of a similar size and reach, but they did not have the same impact. It seems that, although the participants reported similar programmes and most of the key concepts were the same, they did not show the same excitement about and commitment to them as the participants in School A. Perhaps it might be assumed that the demanding nature of the pupil population attending School A triggered teachers' awareness of and

genuine interest in providing support and creating the systems, structures and approaches that would aid efforts to tackle issues relating to behaviour more effectively. The adoption of its code of good behaviour, which was set up as a whole-school approach and extended to classroom level, may also have been a factor.

Much of the information obtained from both schools indicates that the management and staff have planned for, and delivered, intervention programmes on the grounds that offering pupils opportunities they would not have the chance to experience otherwise, as well as finding something they can do well (such as the graffiti project, cycling day, cookbook), are likely to have a positive impact on their self-esteem and confidence. These findings accord with conclusions drawn by Cole et al. (1998), suggesting that, in schools exhibiting good practice, the teachers identify things that the pupils can do well and create opportunities for them to expand the range of their achievements.

In summary, much of the discussion in this section, in light of the findings reported in Chapter 4, suggests that the intervention programmes planned and delivered in both schools, although they encouraged the commitment of pupils to specific aspects of learning and created an inspiring school milieu, need to become systematic and involve the collaboration of not only teachers but also other agents, including associated professionals, local bodies and volunteers and, in addition, include curricular activities.

With regard to the code of good behaviour, much of what was not said by teachers related to policies. The staff and management of School A planned to implement this behavioural approach to address disciplinary as well as other behaviour-related problems at both school and classroom levels, but it was put into effect by some teachers and not others. What is

more, it was also stated by some teachers that they were not aware of any positive outcomes from its application. This would perhaps lead to the conclusion that clear written policies should be established in both schools, about which all teachers should be informed and be ready to apply in their classrooms.

5.4.5 Classroom practices – inclusion or marginalisation?

In addition to exploring teachers' perceptions of the work achieved at school level and the intervention programmes and projects undertaken, their views with regard to what works well with pupils with BESD at classroom level were also investigated.

There was great diversity in the participants' responses, but they seemed to agree on what is good practice for pupils with BESD. Despite the generally traditional style of teaching noted in the observation sessions and the overall poor engagement of pupils with the tasks they were given (see Charts 6 and 7), especially in School A, teachers employed different actions to encourage the engagement of pupils with BESD in the lessons.

In general, the pupils responded well in most of the lessons observed, albeit only for a short time, returning to their previous behaviour. That is because many of the lessons observed were delivered within a traditional frame of action and the teachers tended to use instruction as the main approach, without much interaction with the pupils, which would, potentially, have created challenges and motivation for them. The outcome of this was that pupils engaged in activities other than those required by the lesson, or were disruptive.

Chart 6 indicates that pupils in School B presented a better picture in terms of engagement in tasks than did those in School A. Also, pupils in School A were, to a greater extent, off

task, disruptive and displaying aggressive behaviour than those in School B. Surprisingly, however, if the picture portraying pupils' engagement with tasks is compared with the overall responses of the teachers in the interviews, then questions emerge. To be precise, there are some significant difference between what teachers reported in interviews and what was observed during lessons.

What this says is that the practices employed at classroom by teachers are not addressing the needs of these pupils effectively. Good practice, although as Blandford (2005) says, is not an imaginary phenomenon, however it seems that the role of teachers is important in achieving it. Moreover, as the Elton committee (1989: 67) suggested, 'the classroom is the most important place in the education system' and teacher is a key player in whatever is taking place in the classroom. The personality and professional qualities together with the actions that are employed and a wide understanding and knowledge of the subjects that are taught as well as of the nature of BESD play a significant role on how teacher is responding to the needs of these pupils.

5.4.6 School and classroom milieu

The physical environment of a school may not contribute to the engagement and motivation of pupils to the extent that teachers do, but it does influence how pupils feel the moment they enter the school or classroom, what feelings develop once they have settled in and then throughout the day. It can also make pupils feel welcomed, valued, respected and create a sense of motivation and enthusiasm for learning.

It has been argued that seating arrangements, as well as the physical setting of the classroom, have the potential to prevent behavioural problems affecting the attention of

pupils from occurring. Wannarka and Ruhl (2008) found that the way desks are placed can help, but concluded there is no single classroom seating arrangement that promotes positive behavioural and academic outcomes as other factors might interfere.

The findings from the interviews reported in Chapter 4 show that the improvement of school facilities, to help create a homely atmosphere, as well as pleasant, welcoming classrooms, was a constant concern of the teachers. Similarly, evidence from the observation sessions with regard to the classroom environment, seating arrangements, resources, learning materials and the school environment generally indicates that there is a need for improvements. For some pupils, these are perhaps of particular importance – especially those who have been removed from their families and are staying at children's homes.

An important number of teachers pointed out that simple changes can make a difference to how pupils feel in school and have a considerable effect on behaviour, especially if pupils, as the Elton report argues, are allowed to participate and, as a result, develop a sense of ownership of these changes (DES, 1989). Cole et al. (1998, 2001) remarked on this issue and stressed the need for creating attractive settings that allow pupils to thrive. It is also interesting to note that the comments of some teachers (such as those of teachers mm and jj) are consistent with the recommendations on good practice in schools. One teacher (mm), in particular, insisted that well-resourced schools and classrooms not only motivate pupils and create positive feelings but also help improve behaviour.

Evidence from the observation sessions suggests that where pupils are seated can prevent their full engagement in the lessons and, in some cases, not encourage them to take part in the class (this was the case for the pupil in observation A2, for example). In addition, when

pupils from the same ethnic background were seated together, this resulted in certain behaviour, such as talking, disrupting other pupils and not engaging with the lesson. When, in contrast, pupils were seated in teams and encouraged to participate, most of the time they were responsive and engaged with the activities.

5.4.7 Teachers' qualities and the reality of the classroom

Several studies from the past three decades have identified and highlighted as valuable teachers' qualities that have nothing to do with any kind of special expertise in teaching pupils with BESD (Laslett, 1977; Chazan et al., 1994; Cole et al., 1998; Daniels et al., 1998a; Cole et al., 2001; Visser, 2003, 2005; Cole and Knowles, 2011). They outline characteristics that create a positive value base, such as patience, caring, a good sense of humour, a good relationship with the pupil, empathy, belief that the behaviour can change and a range of other characteristics. Similar teachers' qualities were reported in this study.

Participants from both Schools A and B reported during interviews several qualities of teachers working with pupils presenting with BESD that they considered important. As it was stated teachers have one of the key roles in the education of pupils and their personalities, knowledge and skills are important especially when they work with pupils who additionally to their BESD may experience problems in their family backgrounds (DES, 1989; Chazan et al., 1994; Visser, 2005). Therefore, it was stated in this study, since teachers also hold one of the most important roles in the teaching and learning process their qualities and skills constitute the key factors for working with pupils effectively and help them to reach their fullest potentials.

A wide range of descriptions of qualities were reported and then refined and grouped into three categories: (a) professional, (b) personal and (c) those relating to the delivery of the lesson. The first, the *professional*, concerns qualities that can be developed through teacher training or continuing professional development. The second, the *personal*, concerns qualities of teachers related to their personality and the third refers to qualities related to the delivery of the lesson. The third one, according to the descriptions given, it can be a combination of knowledge, teaching style and personality since the choices made during lesson can be both skills and personal style of working with pupils. Some of the qualities described during interviews echo findings reported in the study of Cole et al., (1998) and Daniels et al., (1998a). Daniels et al., (1998a) reported various characteristics of teachers including the: good sense of humour, honesty, positive relationships with pupils and warm relationships, transparency in communication, patience and tolerance, genuine interest about the child and excitement.

Similar qualities were reported by participants in this study. For instance, as the SEN teacher explained with reference to the pupil with BESD attending the Unit, *the behaviour is just the tip of the iceberg* (g). As the same teacher further explained, *what we see it is just the surface of what may lie beneath*. For this reason, teachers need to be able to show understanding and empathise instead of being judgemental or confrontational –in order to achieve this is important that teachers are good listeners first and then able to understand the behaviour of the pupil. As it was also highlighted by some of the teachers and especially by the music teacher (qq) and one of the headteachers of School B (b), what is most important when working with pupils with BESD is the teachers to have a genuine interest to work with these pupils. This was also an issue that has been raised by Papadopoulos (2003a) in the

proposed plan for the ZEP schools and also in the study of Loizidou et al., (2007) but it does not seem that the Education Service committee (which is responsible body for the appointment and transfer of teachers in schools) to have taken this seriously.

Other participants in this study highlighted the importance of having a patience, a sense of humour and building positive relationship with the pupils. As it was stated a good sense of humour is important step for building positive relationships with pupils. This view reminds the discussion of Visser (2005) on 'eternal verities' who identifies the sense of humour, the ability of building positive relationships, transparency in communication and the belief that behaviour can change, as important eternal values which are linked with achieving positive outcomes. Visser (2005a: 30) points out that it is not necessary for teachers to have any expertise or training skills to have a positive relationship with pupils, what is needed to start building such a relationship is a good sense of humour, because 'having fun' is a key step for developing a relationship with the child:

The classroom is seen as a place where we enjoy ourselves both
teacher and taught in purposeful learning.

Daniels et al (1998a: 54) highlighted that to work effectively with pupils with BESD teachers need to be, more than required, aware about the needs of individual pupils and to show 'warmth and acceptance' towards the pupil as well as interest and enthusiasm to work with them. Similarly evidence from observations show that when teachers were creating a warm, friendly and positive atmosphere then pupils were very responsive and behaved generally better. For instance during the observations A8/A9 and B5, the teachers not only demonstrated an 'air of knowing what they were doing' (Daniels et al., 1998a:54), but also

excitement about their lesson and energy. Pupils in these lessons were too busy to misbehave as their attention was directed to the lesson.

Qualities of teachers in lessons observed

During the course of the interviews, it was possible to discuss with the teachers their views ideas and concerns about different issues related to the pupils with BESD. In the observation sessions, it could be seen that what teachers said in the interviews was not necessarily reflected in the reality of the classroom. There were other lessons, however, where teachers used challenging and enjoyable approaches in a way that valued the different learning styles of the pupils and took into account the range of their needs.

Of the 29 lessons observed, 19 (these observations included six out of fifteen teachers) were delivered in a traditional way, using mostly an instructional method of teaching. The kinds of teachers' qualities needed for working effectively with pupils presenting BESD outlined in this study, were rarely seen in some of these lessons. These lessons were, thus, mainly approached as a way of instructing the pupils, by reading the book prescribed by the MOEC, answering questions, writing on the board and opening discussions with the pupils. Features related to the delivery of the lesson, reported by participants (Chapter 4, Table 12), such as the use of praise and rewarding system, the use of technology, differentiation and team working were only observed in some observations. Overall, a lot of time was spent on giving direction for the pupils' work and explaining tasks. It was my impression, as well, during some of the observations that teachers lacked confidence, were not adequately trained and therefore the pupils behaviour and responsiveness was not a surprise to me. The recommendation of Angelides (2000) who presented different classroom incidences

examining how teachers were dealing with pupils who presented with BESD in their classrooms, would be helpful in this study, to understand why teachers decided to deliver their lessons in this way and could potentially shed light to the values that the particular teachers considered important for working with pupils with BESD. Angelides (2000: 64), also, commented that a possible for certain actions of teachers is the fact that the pupil is labelled due to his/her behaviour:

No teacher had wanted Christiana in his/her class the year before, so the headteacher bribed the one who got her with three pupils less than the other parallel class, something that continued the following year.

Possible reasons for delivering lessons in a traditional style

In this study, a great deal of time was also spent on applying strategies to cope with behavioural difficulties. It seems that those teachers who employed the more traditional approaches, '*lecturing style of teaching*' lacked the relevant knowledge and experience of, first, teaching in a ZEP school and, second, teaching a class that includes pupils with complex needs and difficulties, such as BESD. It might be assumed that these teachers did not feel adequately equipped to undertake 'risky', time-consuming (in terms of planning) methods during teaching that would mean they transferred perhaps less information, but gave them a greater variety of activities.

Some possible explanations for the teachers being more confident about teaching using an *instructive* approach might be related to their experience, training and interest in working in these schools. First, it is worth noting that, of the teachers observed, only three reported

having received training relating to behavioural difficulties and the average time that they had been working in the ZEP schools was two years. Only one person reported having worked for a lot of years in the school and that person was a TA rather than a teacher.

Another possible explanation could be the nature of the teaching profession, as well as its culture. First, as the MOEC has a top-down management structure and its control of services is highly centralised, including the employment of teachers, transfers from one school to another, the inspectorate system and promotions, teachers may experience an ongoing ‘monotony’, which, in turn, discourages them from taking any initiatives. Second, there is the cultural element attached to the teaching profession in Cyprus. As Karagiorgi and Symeou (2007) explain in their study, the fact that teaching potentially offers convenient working hours and long holidays means it tends to be a popular career choice for young people in Cyprus. Thus, they work in an environment in which their professional competence is not valued and will not help them to build their careers. This is reason enough for their motivation to be affected and the amount of initiative they take to be restricted (Karagiorgi and Symeou, 2006). The nature of the teaching profession is an issue also acknowledged in Loizidou et al.’s (2007) study, which concluded that, given the level of complexity pertaining to teaching in ZEP schools, the teachers should be offered better benefits.

Although the lessons were mainly delivered in a traditional way, evidence from the observation sessions indicates that there was some positive teaching of pupils with BESD in the two schools. The work of particular teachers, as reported in Chapter 4, provides examples of good practice. These include the lessons in observations, A7, A8, A9, B2, B5

and B5. In all these cases, the teachers were committed to all their pupils and delivered well-planned lessons (the teachers provided their lesson plans, setting out the activities, their objectives and levels). They valued the different traits and needs of their pupils and provided them with challenging and enjoyable activities. The lessons were clear in terms of the objectives set and instructions given and the pupils responded and engaged with the majority of the tasks. If the behaviour of the pupils (see Chart 5) is seen collectively, it becomes evident that they were on task most of the time. In the case of observations A8 and A9, however, both pupils were Roma and both of them, as the teacher pointed out, had great difficulty in understanding and writing Greek.

The evidence from the interviews and observations raises questions about the qualities the teachers working in the school possess, as well as their level of interest in working in ZEP schools. The study by Loizidou et al. (2007) and the philosophy at the core of the Priority Education Policy (as discussed in Chapter 2, concerning the examples of such policies in France and England) is that teachers should be appointed to work in ZEP schools because it is their personal choice to work there, not simply be told that is where they are to work with no say in the matter.

Acknowledging that the existing complexities in ZEP schools and the nature of their pupil populations are reasons enough to discourage teachers from working in them, Loizidou et al. (2007: 73) suggest that, apart from ensuring teachers come to work in these schools because they want to, benefits should be offered to them so as to encourage and motivate them to work there:

Beyond the personal motivation of each teacher to work in ZEP schools, there are hardly any benefits offered to teachers. The MOEC must improve the benefits offered to teachers who are appointed or choose to work in ZEP schools. Such benefits could be personal scholarships for further education in related subjects.

5.4.8 Practices relating to the Priority Education Policy and associated with BESD

The review of the literature on ‘priority education’ suggests that its philosophy and key objectives and, thus, of the ZEP schools programme is to raise educational standards and generally eliminate factors contributing to pupils failing to be educated or dropping out of education after primary level due to socio-economic factors (Papadopoulos, 2002; Loizidou et al., 2007; Etienne et al., 2008, Benabou et al., 2009). Among the key objectives is also to promote positive behaviour in schools and encourage and motivate children from disadvantaged backgrounds to access education.

The study by Loizidou et al. (2007) on Cypriot ZEPs conducted for the Pedagogical Institute, despite providing evidence that suggests the ZEP programme has generally been a success during the first phase of its implementation in the Cypriot educational system, proposes recommendations to make the operation of ZEP schools more effective. These include the relevant and adequate training of teachers and staff of ZEP schools, better communication between schools and departments of the MOEC, as well as improvements to school buildings.

Participants in this study echoed Loizidou et al’s (2007) recommendations, suggesting that there is a need for the adequate training of teachers working in these schools, especially as they have to deal with behavioural difficulties on a daily basis. Additionally, participants

suggested the need for better communication between schools and the departments and services of the MOEC to enable the early identification and assessment of the needs of pupils presenting with BESD. The participants' comments about how lengthy the procedure for identifying and assessing pupils' needs and then providing support currently is supports the recommendation to improve the communication between departments and the support given to schools by the different departments of the MOEC.

B. ISSUES RELATED TO THE RESEARCH PROCESS

5.5 Shortcomings of the research process

Like any other piece of educational research, the present study has not been conducted without concerns over its potential shortcomings. The discussion in the following sections focuses on these shortcomings.

5.5.1 The researcher's position and neutrality

As Thomas (2009: 109) argues a key assumption in interpretivists research is that knowledge is 'situated in relations between people'. The position of the researcher in the discovery and delivery of the new knowledge, therefore, becomes a central feature of the research (Thomas, 2009). This position also affects the way interpretations are made on observations and the conclusions drawn. Thus as Thomas (2009) recommends interpretative researchers must accept their subjectivity in presenting their research. This argument has been recently highlighted by the BERA (2011) which sets forward a question:

Can anyone ever be truly neutral? Do our values, attitudes, feelings necessarily play a part in everything we do, say and think? (BERA, 2011)

Achieving neutrality was an ongoing concern across all the phases of this study, from its design to reporting of the findings. That is because a key motivation for undertaking this study was that it came out of my work as a teacher in Cyprus, wanting to improve the situation for pupils who present with BESD. A familiarity with the subject of study has contributed to shaping the research design.

The neutrality of any research report is challenged by the 'biography' that the researcher brings to the research process (BERA, 2011). Hartas (2010), in discussing the issue of a researcher's identity, position on the subject being studied and values in research, argues that any choice made by the researcher when undertaking a research project, including the epistemology, methodology and the choice of paradigm, are influenced by his or her values, beliefs and identity. To what extent should the researcher's own position, values and biases in writing up a research report be acknowledged and what are the implications of this for the research process? Should a researcher aim for neutrality?

As Maxwell (2005: 108) suggests, qualitative research:

is not primarily concerned with eliminating the variance between researchers in the values and expectations they bring to the study, but with understanding how a particular researcher's values and expectations influence the conduct and conclusion of the study.

Despite the difficulty in achieving neutrality, following the appropriate approach to research, such as the processes used for data collection, methods and methodology, it should be possible to validate the conclusions by presenting the evidence and recognising the potential for contamination of the results due to the researcher's position and place in the

research (Hartas, 2010). Hartas (2010: 21) also suggests that researchers adopt ‘transparency’ and ‘openness’ about their positions and biases. When these are clearly acknowledged during the research process, conclusions can be drawn concerning the trustworthiness of the whole process of the research that is reported.

Carrying out fieldwork in a similar situation to the one I had been in as a teacher brought to this research not only a concern regarding the effects of my position and questions about my neutrality, but also different dynamics. Disclosing my identity to participants as being a teacher who had worked in a ZEP school and, thus, familiar with issues relating to working in a school such as theirs helped to bridge the gap between my role as a researcher and the role of the participants. It helped those who consented to participate to trust me when talking about their experiences and how they perceive good practice. Both women and men participants treated me the same and they were very curious about my work, wanting to know more about my involvement in research concerning children with BESD and especially my interest in studying practices developed in the two subject schools. By disclosing to them more information about me, including having been a member of staff in another school in the area, participants felt that I was familiar with and aware of the issues involved in working in this type of school and, therefore, someone who understood their work and the kinds of tensions that arise when working with pupils with BESD.

5.5.1.1 The researcher’s position and subjectivity: preconceived ideas

Although disclosing my identity helped participants to be fairly open and give full responses, there were some possible disadvantages to doing so, too.

Having been a teacher who had worked in a school that is similar to the subject schools could have meant that, as a result, I would make assumptions or have preconceived ideas about the subject schools. This could raise questions concerning subjectivity because, as an interpretative researcher working with only one other helper for part of the study, I played a key role in carrying out the research and, thus, the validity of the data-collection process and the findings of both the interviews and observation sessions and my interpretations of them could be called into question as a result. Thomas (2009) discusses this issue, suggesting that, to avoid compromising credibility and in order to be able to achieve objectivity, researchers must examine the research questions and see how their position may affect the responses of participants.

The issue of subjectivity in relation to a researcher's position has been widely debated in the qualitative research literature (Milner, 2007; Cohen et al., 2007; Thomas, 2009; Hartas, 2010). As Thomas (2009: 99) argues:

The researcher is an active, not passive, agent in acquiring knowledge of the processes, histories, events, language and biographies of the research context. Because of the importance of the nature of the relation between the researcher and research participants, the researcher's biography – including class, gender, ethnicity, ideas and commitments – needs to be made explicit.

As can be seen from the discussion in the previous section, I was open about my background with the participants to overcome any subjectivity relating to my position affecting the research as much as possible.

Even with background knowledge and experience, it is impossible to be completely prepared – there are some things to be learned in the field. For example, I was aware that, in conducting the research in the two subject schools, I would come across certain issues, such

as the serious behavioural difficulties presented by some of the pupils and family problems. I was also aware that, by being part of the ZEP programme, these schools would have better access to services for their pupils, including those of the EPD and SWS, than other schools. I encountered an unexpected issue, however, that proved to be important to my work in School A: the idea of links between Roma ethnicity and behavioural difficulties. Before contacting the school, I was aware that many Turkish Cypriot pupils attend the school, but I did not know that those designated Turkish Cypriot are, in fact, Roma. The school considers them to be Turkish Cypriots because of the language they speak and their relations with the northern part of Cyprus. Moreover, studying some SWS documents (SWS, 2009, 2010) led to another issue that has been reported earlier in this thesis: family deprivation and violence. These two issues, together with BESD, were examined in School A. In School B, the situation was different and participants talked more about behavioural issues in relation to poor family relationships, poverty, imprisonment of one of the parents and unemployment. The interviews together with the research in the literature raised questions concerning the differences in the situations in the two subject schools and the implications for working with pupils with BESD.

As well as helping somewhat in the field, my professional background and experiences were key in another way. As mentioned in Chapter 1, they provided the motivation for undertaking this research as my experiences raised my awareness of the subject of the study and triggered ideas that shaped its design. So, being a Cypriot teacher led to this study being undertaken and helped a lot during the data-collection process as I had an understanding of the social background of the pupils with BESD and the teachers' teaching and learning practices. By being open about my background with the participants and in this thesis, every

effort has been made to make the most of the positive aspects of my position and minimise the negative aspects, being as unbiased as possible, so that the findings will be deemed valid.

5.5.2 Representativeness of the sample

Key texts on the methodology of research agree that the researcher must be clear about what the sample represents, the sampling frame and the results in order for the research to have validity (Robson, 2002; Cohen et al., 2007). It should be noted in this case, therefore, that, despite some reticence on the part of staff in School A, a significant proportion of the members of staff in each school participated in the interviews (School A, 60.0%; School B, 65.0%) and the observations (School A, 60.0%; School B, 35.0% -see Chapter 4, Table 6).

It could be implied that the sample is relatively small, so cannot be claimed that these teachers' and others' accounts are representative of the whole of the population of teachers working in ZEP schools in Cyprus or even just those working in Schools A and B. Further, as only six of the interviews were with supporting professionals and other support staff (TAs) in the schools, their accounts, although significant for the development of the argument, are even less representative of the views of all such professionals working in ZEP schools.

Even though it cannot be claimed to be representative statistically, the aim of the study has still been achieved as the findings and conclusions do provide valuable information and, it is hoped, their publication will create greater awareness of the situation for those working in ZEP schools with pupils with BESD and, perhaps, lead to the instigation of more research in this area. Regarding this last point, given that the subject of this study is one currently

neglected by other researchers, the findings of my research do satisfy another aim, too – that of generating questions that could potentially form the basis for further research or lead to it being expanded to include other schools and explore more generally what makes for good practice when working with pupils with BESD.

5.5.3 Familiarity with the term BESD and the concept of good practice

BESD is a widely understood and used term in English education. It is also widely applied in official documents (for example DfE, 1994, DfES, 2001; DCSF, 2008). Although the Cypriot education is highly influenced by the English one (Phtiaka, 2001; Symeonidou, 2005), the term BESD has not yet been introduced with an official definition. Moreover, while the Department for Education in England continues to grapple with the challenges of working with pupils with BESD in very concrete ways, in Cyprus, the 2008 ‘National report on education’ (MOEC, 2008), only just started to officially acknowledge that it is an issue and take serious steps to address it.

Concerns about the lack of a solid and consistent definition in Cyprus, as well as participants’ lack of familiarity with it as a result, were highlighted by the fact that some participants (see Chapter 4) asked for further clarification of the term when interviewed and during the briefings. This situation had not prevented participants from developing their own views and understanding of this issue (see Chapter 4, section 4.3) as well as their own practices, as they were familiar with what it was, but just had not been given a name for it. Moreover despite the lack of definition in official documents and requests for further clarifications both in interviews and also in the briefings that were conducted, participants

did develop their own understandings of BESD which accords to descriptions provided in literature.

It is worth highlighting at this point that participants' views suggest having an official definition of BESD and evidence-based guidelines would potentially help to improve practices in the two schools and, if one had been in place previously, the findings of this study might have been quite different.

5.5.4 Observation recording system

For the purposes of this study, a recording system was applied in observations. The recording system was used to record the teachers' approaches during lesson and pupils' behaviour. It included behaviours related to pupils engagement to the lesson –that is *off task*, *on task*, *disruptive*, *aggressive* and *other* (for any other behaviour observed and not listed). Concerning teachers' approaches, it included two related to the delivery of the lesson (*opens discussion*, *explains task*) and three related to how teachers were helping the child to engage with the lesson (*provides individual support*, *behaviour incentives*, *reminds behaviour rules*).

There may be other forms of behaviour that could be examined through observations, but, restricting the observation form to these ones was linked with the purpose and objectives of the study which was not to observe which behaviours pupils display in the classroom and their frequency. Rather the aim was to explore what teachers do to enhance good practice when working with pupils who present with BESD. Also, there is a wider spectrum of approaches that could be employed by the teachers, nevertheless those chosen to be included in the observation form considered also to be most relevant to the Cypriot context.

Furthermore a difficulty with recording emerged during observations and therefore the use of this observation form in subsequent studies must be done with due caution.

5.5.5 Observations and the reactivity effect

A limitation of the research findings arising from the fact of the presence of an observer in the classroom is known as the ‘reactivity effect’ (Cohen et al., 2007: 189). This means that the presence of the researcher alters the existing situation as participants may wish to impress and so try create an ideal picture of the situation or even influence the researcher.

In the case of this study, it is possible that the presence of an observer in the classroom might have had an impact on how the teachers acted during lessons. Indeed, the pupils were also sometimes a little excited about having the observer in the classroom and were interested in understanding what was going on. This was especially the case in the first few minutes of classroom observation sessions in which there were two observers. In some cases, pupils approached one or the other of the two observers and asked a lot of questions, especially at the beginning of the session. This effect lessened once the lessons were under way, however, and they appeared to settle in to the situation.

5.5.6 Time management issues

A challenging issue and concern for the researcher, was the management of time for the observation sessions. As teachers usually have a very busy daily schedule, working with a researcher as well could be seen as an added burden. This was a factor that needed to be handled carefully throughout the data-collection process, especially when negotiating times to conduct the observations and during them.

The briefing sessions helped to address this issue right at the outset, as I provided a plan in advance and consent forms and teachers chose times that suited them for the interviews and/or observation sessions. This was not sufficient to resolve things for all the participants in both schools, however. In addition, for some teachers, it was necessary to approach them individually and gain their consent.

In addition, the management of time during the observation sessions was a key issue. Each observation session lasted for 40 minutes. The pupils needed to be given time to settle in if they were coming into class after a break. For this reason, in the majority of the cases, the pupils were called back into the classroom five minutes before the end of breaktime. This was enough to allow for the necessary introductions and the pupils to settle before starting the observation session.

Organising the sessions in such a way ensured that not a significant amount of time was lost, the effect of the presence of the researcher was minimised and a systematic effort was invested in being accurate about timing each observation session.

5.6 Summary

The findings reported in Chapter 4 have been discussed further in this chapter, providing a thorough analysis of the key aspects relating to the subject of this study. The final chapter discusses lessons that can be learned from how the research was conducted.

From what participants reported, it can be seen that pupils presenting with BESD in school is just the tip of the iceberg – social and family backgrounds play a huge role in the behaviour seen – and good practice is possible, resulting in great improvements for these

pupils, especially when schools invest in creating a positive ethos that is responsive to the needs of these pupils, as well as working as a team with key professionals and families and having staff with relevant training and qualities, such as those described in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

6.1 A return to the research problem

The existence of pupils presenting with BESD is neither a new phenomenon nor a new trend in education. The literature review showed that the issue of BESD has concerned educational authorities internationally for many decades. Even in Cyprus, where the term is not as well known as it is in Europe, accounts in the literature (although limited), as well as some of the initiatives introduced by the MOEC, such as integration as part of the priority education policy and, more recently, the institution of a committee that examines the issue of behaviour, suggest the growing concern of its education authorities to address this issue. What is needed is systematic research examining not only perceptions of how the needs of pupils presenting with these difficulties could be best met in ZEP schools but also the extent of BESD in Cypriot primary education, the implications of it not having been addressed sufficiently so far and ways to improve teachers' and other professionals' awareness of this issue and their practice as an extension of this.

The study presented in this thesis has offered a comprehensive account of teachers' and other associated professionals' experiences, concerns, recommendations and their general views as to what constitutes good practice. It has been very worthwhile examining a subject that has not been examined before in the educational context of Cyprus.

The interviews that were carried out helped to elucidate issues related to the practices that are used, including the process of identifying and assessing special needs and deciding what

support should be provided, which people are involved in the schools, their professional roles and how they work together with the teachers in individual cases. Important data were collected that define the importance of the teacher's role in creating a positive ethos and delivering lessons in such a way the challenging behaviour of children is not ignored but, rather, directed and shaped into something positive throughout the process of learning.

The observation sessions shed light on the practices used at classroom level and provided an alternative perspective on what the teachers reported in the interviews. Indeed, during these sessions many of the views participants expressed concerning what works for pupils with BESD and what the role of the teacher were explored in action and the reality could be compared with the views expressed.

In the sessions, too, the pupils with BESD were seen enjoying some lessons and fully engaging with the tasks set by the teacher, but, in others, were isolated from classroom activities, left working on tasks that were not relevant to what was going on in the lesson and the other pupils were doing, sitting alone or next to another child with similar difficulties or even sitting next to the teacher, so their behaviour could be monitored. The observation sessions show that what happens in the classroom reflects, to a great extent, what teachers do – how they approach the lesson, how their personal qualities and professional skills contribute to building a positive ethos and a relationship of respect, trust and care or the opposite.

The interviews also highlighted factors that contribute to behavioural difficulties and the role of the school in developing good practice. Issues related to the pupils' family, ethnic and cultural backgrounds and how these are related to BESD were considered very

influential. Similarly, the roles of different professionals and their collaboration with schools, the need for such collaborations to improve, as well as the need for adequate training and support in the classrooms were also pointed out. Teachers, especially, expressed their concerns regarding how they are to work with these pupils when there is not enough support in the classroom or the school as a whole. They also described their experiences of working in the two subject ZEP schools and with pupils with BESD. In doing so, they showed their concern about and views on the issue of behaviour in the two schools and spoke of the importance of building partnerships with the pupils' families.

The overall conclusion that can be drawn from this study of the two subject schools is good practice does not grow overnight – it takes a lot of effort and people working together, including governors, professionals from a range of disciplines and other organisations and individuals, teachers and parents. Also, there is no one formula or group or combination of people that will make this work. Elements of good practice suggested in key texts and discussions with regard to the needs of pupils with BESD (Cooper, 1993; Cole et al., 1998; Daniels et al., 1998a, Daniels et al., 1998b; Cole and Visser, 1999; Visser, 2005), as well as examples drawn from this study, also lead to the conclusion that the physical location of the school does not really affect the effectiveness of the work undertaken with these pupils. Whether an SEN school or SEN unit, mainstream school or ZEP school, there is always the potential to develop good practice. What matters most is having practitioners with an understanding of what the needs are, prompt and efficient professional support, teachers who are able to deliver well-thought through school programmes and lessons, as well as a welcoming and well-resourced school environment.

Evidence from this study suggests that there is a need for guidance concerning how to provide the best practice when pupils in a school are considered to have or officially identified as having any difficulties that fall under the umbrella term 'BESD'. Whatever the name given to the difficulties and whatever the underlying causal factors are, there is a need to have a framework in place that helps the schools and teachers in their efforts to provide the best practice possible. The Priority Education Policy, as the literature suggests (Papadopoulos, 2003; Giannaka et al., 2007; Loizidou et al., 2007), offers a framework that sets the foundations for systems and processes to work effectively at tackling inequality, raise educational standards for pupils coming from deprived backgrounds, increase pupils' motivation to attend school and reduce the numbers of pupils dropping out of education. It is not clear, however, how behavioural difficulties in schools are addressed effectively by means of the ZEP schools programme.

Regarding the issue of BESD specifically, it seems to have been given very little attention in the policies produced by the authorities. Yet, pupils identified by their teachers and other associated professionals as having difficulties and put forward for assessment, as well as those formally diagnosed with behaviour related difficulties attend the two subject schools, encounter a range of difficulties and externalise behaviours that often disturb the smooth running of the school and make little progress in their learning – all with little or no guidance being given to their teachers and others to follow.

In light of what has been said, then, there is a need for more systematic and larger studies of BESD to be carried out in Cyprus. The findings from this case study provide only an indication of the issues relating to BESD and it is important to find out what the full extent

of these might be. Equally, the exploration of teachers' and other associated professionals' views on good practice achieved much of value in terms of understanding how this issue and good practice are currently addressed, especially in the two subject schools, but this and other research on good practice should be expanded to include other schools – mainstream and other ZEP schools – to give a fuller picture and enable teachers to really work effectively with pupils with BESD progress in their learning and provide them with a positive future.

6.2 Lessons to be learned from this study and recommendations for future practice

Research with regard to the learning of pupils with BESD, as discussed in Chapter 2, has indicated that establishing mechanisms for good practice in schools is associated with five key elements. These are each school's:

- population – the pupils and their families
- people – teachers and associated professionals
- provision – of support
- place – school and classroom environment.

It seems, however, that the personalities and actions of the people who work with pupils with BESD have a great bearing on their effectiveness. Given the lessons learned from this study and the preceding discussion, some of the implications of these that would potentially improve practice with the pupils with BESD in the two schools are put forward at this point. In addition, these recommendations aim to meet one of the primary aims of this study, which was to expand a relatively unexplored field of Cypriot education and establish an awareness of the practices presently applied in the two subject ZEP schools that could

potentially form the grounds for further future research. Further, I hope that the points of good practice described earlier will be made available to help teachers who currently work with pupils with BESD or will do in the future.

6.2.1 Procedure for the identification and assessment of special needs and provision of support: the need for improvement

The majority of the participants' responses indicated that it took a long time from filing a request for assessment with the EPD to a decision being reached. Meanwhile, the pupils concerned receive no support, apart from being given differentiated tasks or some individual work with the teachers. Teachers from both schools showed their disappointment with how the MOEC's highly centralised organisation, which controls services, delays statutory assessments and decisions concerning how pupils' difficulties are to be addressed while on the other SEN teacher and EP stated 'workload' as the reason for delays in the dissemination of this procedure.

The teachers also constantly recommended that better communication and collaboration between all teachers and associated professionals, including EPs, the EPD, the SWS officers, SEN teachers and TAs, would enhance current practices and result in better outcomes for pupils. The professional practices of each one of these people or organisations were considered essential for different aspects of the school system. For instance, teachers repeatedly noted that having an EP and SEN teacher in the school would enable them to consult and seek advice more regularly and better monitor pupils' behaviour and progress. In addition, teachers would not have to deal in the classroom with problems that pupils bring from home – emotional distress, aggression and depression sometimes caused by

situations within the family. Instead, if prompt and systematic professional support was provided, this would foster quicker and more efficient interventions with long-term impacts on pupils' behaviour.

From the perceptions of participants, concerning the procedure, it becomes evident that practices depend heavily on the provisions of the 1999 SEN legislation and the 2003 Code of Practice (MOEC, 1999; MOEC, 2003) for delivering their services to children (EPs, SEN teacher) or for delivering the demands of the curriculum (teachers). The participants' concerns about how the procedure of identification, assessment and provision is disseminated suggests that improvements need to be made and perhaps the 2003 code of practice to be reviewed.

6.2.2 Whole-school practices and initiatives

Both schools planned for and implemented projects that involved the whole school, families and targeted many pupils, including those with BESD. These had a very positive effect on the behaviour of pupils. Without a doubt, the evidence from the interviews and observation sessions indicates that the whole-school projects can potentially improve pupils' behaviour – especially for example the creation of a music CD by School A.

One whole-school action directly related to behaviour in School A was the issuing of a code of good behaviour. This was only mentioned in School A, however, and not all the teachers employed it with their pupils. One of the teachers thought that it put pressure on pupils to behave well. Despite this, its application and effect on pupils' behaviour was included on the agenda of staff meetings for review and perhaps some changes could be made to how it

is applied so that it will be more motivating for the pupils and then it will be used generally rather than ignored by some teachers.

In general, though there were some notable successes, it can be agreed that the whole-school practices applied at Schools A and B could be more consistent and systematic, directed by general behaviour management guidelines prepared in collaboration with the associated professionals, teachers and the management of the schools. Behaviour management guidelines could potentially direct the attention of practitioners to the individual needs of pupils and, therefore, be informed by the characteristics of the school population.

6.2.3 Families

Participants from both schools highlighted the importance of creating or strengthening the home-school links between the schools and the families of their pupils. The findings from this study, however, suggest that, at this time, the involvement of most of the families is virtually non-existent and their attitude towards the schools is negative. The teachers gave several different reasons for this, such as parents' lack of interest in their children's learning, Greek not being their mother tongue, their lifestyle, generally negative attitudes towards schooling and other more serious issues, such as, unemployment, drug use, or being single parents.

Both the schools planned for and implemented various projects to improve the involvement of the families with the schools, such as evening classes for language lessons for illiterate parents, parents' evenings, school productions and them spending a day in the schools. Further, a more far-reaching and higher-level initiative was that implemented by the MOEC

and the SWS, which offered all families at the beginning of the year basic supplies, such as stationery, school uniforms and other products to help them with basic hygiene, to motivate parents to register their children in their local school.

A message that emerged from the interviews, however, is that parents are not very responsive to the initiatives of schools and teachers. It is true to say that, there is no evidence from this study to suggest that the implementation of the initiatives described established strong home–school partnerships or had a long-term effect on parents. In addition, while this study does not offer evidence that a relationship of mutual collaboration with the families was established as a result of the schools’ initiatives, because suggestions and comments made by participants in this study come in line with findings from previous studies (Phtiaka, 2001; Symeonidou, 2002; Giannaka et al., 2007; Cole et al., 1998, 2001; Daniels et al., 1998b) that a sustained effort by schools to strengthening home–school links is appreciated and important for working effectively with pupils with BESD.

6.2.4 Teachers

Throughout this study, the teachers repeatedly described the professional and personal qualities of teachers working with pupils with BESD. They also expressed concern about their professional competency to deal with the needs of pupils with BESD. They felt that they needed training to enhance their current knowledge and this would increase their confidence. This was also an issue which was observed, some teachers were more confident than other in working with pupils with BESD.

The teachers mentioned some strategies and approaches that they use, including incentive and reward systems, empathy and differentiation, as well as taking time to talk with the

pupils. In one case, a teacher mentioned using punishment and warnings. Some of these strategies were evidenced in the observation sessions.

Essentially, the teachers did understand that the needs of pupils with BESD may require them to use strategies to motivate them or manage their behavioural difficulties. From their comments, they seemed well-read and well-versed in general teaching practices from their undergraduate studies and had a knowledge base on which to build to improve their practice with these pupils. All the same, it was notable that the teachers still repeatedly said they wanted more training and CPD. Their appeals signify what research has also highlighted to be a weakness of the education system in Cyprus: not offering sufficient in-service training courses based on the needs of teachers (Symeou and Karagiorgi, 2006, 2007; Loizidou et al., 2007).

Although there is no doubt that more in-service training and CPD is needed, by focusing on this as a solution, the teachers were missing out a crucial part of what makes them effective in the classroom. The teachers were, understandably, concerned about their ability to respond to pupils' needs, but it is not only their professionalism and learned skills that can have an effect on outcomes. Evidence from this study shows that teachers' personal qualities were the tipping point in their work with pupils with BESD. Having a sense of humour, understanding, empathy and being ready to take the initiative and create motivating experiences to make the pupils feel secure and forget their anxieties for a while made all the difference. Thus, a move away from the more remote traditional teaching techniques should be encouraged as a way forward. Laslett (1977: 255) sums this up so well and, although he

wrote these words a long time ago, they convey something important that has been proven to be eternal:

The sympathetic response to children's needs, and a certain degree of selflessness, have been characteristics of teachers who have been of most help ..., and their attitudes have influenced their colleagues in the ordinary school system.

6.2.4.1 The extra half mile...

The interviews with the teachers participating in this study revealed their concerns, recommendations and, furthermore, raised a number of issues that could form the basis of further future research. The observation sessions, however, taught a different lesson. Whatever the odds when teaching a pupil who challenges not only the authority but also the professional and personal resilience of the teacher, it is not a utopian ideal to believe that the pupil *can* thrive. It is not easy, but it is possible when a teacher is willing to go, what Visser would call, 'the extra half mile' (Visser, 2005:166). This was only observed in two cases (observation B5 and observation A8/A9) the teachers in those two cases worked really hard for gaining and maintaining the attention and interest of the children during their lesson. And the outcome was great, children's behaviour difficulties were washed away, and even though their learning outcomes and contribution to the lesson was not excellent it was significant as they were providing important efforts. And this is important because, as Visser (2005:234) said:

Having a belief in the ability of even the most damaged child's ability to change and develop into an acceptable adult (maybe with great deal of support) sustains pedagogues' uses of any approach.

6.2.5 Need for reviewing current support partnerships

In discussing good practice, participants very commonly reported the importance of establishing and maintaining support partnerships between the different professionals who can provide learning, as well as psychological support to pupils with BESD. The nature of this partnership seems to be divided into two forms: at school-level and at classroom-level. Most commonly teachers expressed the view that a TA would enhance their practice in classroom. In addition it was very commonly reported professionals such as EP and SEN teachers and SWS (in the case of issues relating to children's families) could work together for achieving the best practice in meeting the needs of pupils with BESD, although, as stressed, the way this collaboration exists needs to be reviewed and to receive improvements.

It can be claimed that the suggestions made in this study concerning the role of the EPs, SWS officers, SEN teachers, SEN (those most commonly reported as needed), in relation to their collaboration with the schools for delivering good practice needs to be examined –in this case how quick their response is to the calls of the schools to view new cases, their effectiveness in delivering the identification and assessment procedure, as well as in making sure that the teachers are well-informed and supported throughout the education of these children.

The presence of a TA in the classroom, for example, was raised by teachers in both schools. It seems that they all consider the support provided by TAs in both the classroom and SEN units essential and substantial in meeting the needs of any child with SEN, including pupils with BESD. It was surprising, however, that, although both schools needed

such support, only a total of three TAs were working in the schools and one of these was working in School A and two in School B. Also, they were highly valued even though the TAs in the two subject schools were unqualified personnel. The effectiveness of the TAs' role should be the subject of future research and be explored by the educational authorities. Also it is my opinion that ways to improve their role in school must also be examined.

Moreover, participants in both schools expressed the need for more regular collaboration with the SWS, especially regarding pupils looked after in children's homes and others coming from very problematic family backgrounds. The participants' constant concern in this area was when there were delays in the SWS's response when the schools had requested their involvement, so they called for action to be taken to establish better and more systematic communication in the future.

6.2.6 A positive ethos and motivating milieu in schools

The ZEP coordinator reported that there had been a number of initiatives to improve the facilities in both Schools A and B, but the overall school environment and classrooms were still rather discouraging places in which to learn. They did not create a welcoming, warm, and motivating environment for pupils. What is more, apart from basic resources, such as books provided by the MOEC, maps and computers and resources for specialised lessons (such as maths and science), hardly any other educational resources were seen in the classrooms.

The situation in School B was slightly better than in School A, but there is much that could be done to improve the school environment, such as more child-friendly classrooms, with displays of pupils' work there. Involving the pupils in all decisions regarding what could be

done to improve the school environment would potentially foster their motivation and sense of respect for school property.

6.3 Implications for further research

6.3.1 Pupils' participation in research

The voices of pupils with BESD need to be heard to ensure that they not only receive the best care but also are heard in all matters affecting them. One such matter is their education and learning and, by offering them a chance to express their views, it is likely that their sense of ownership of the changes initiated for them will be enhanced. Authors such as Cooper (1990), Wise (1999) and Davies (2005) draw attention to the significance of listening to pupils' views, which, as Davies (2005: 299) writes, 'holds the key to subsequent action to combat social exclusion'.

In this study, the perspectives of pupils were not studied specifically, but those of their teachers and associated professionals working with them were. That is because, from the outset of this study and during first telephone contact (during 2007) with the department of the MOEC, which was responsible for assessing research project proposals and granting permission to conduct them, a senior officer advised that it would be 'extremely difficult' to obtain consents from all the families of the children in the schools to conduct interviews with them. The argument presented was that the 'language' and the 'cultural and social problems' of some of the parents would become a considerable barrier during the research process. Therefore, due to the lack of adequate professional experience in conducting such research, it was decided that it would be best in this instance to not conduct interviews with the pupils in this study. Importantly, however, the recommendations made in the 'National

report on education' (MOEC, 2008a) for establishing a Centre for Educational Research and Evaluation (CERE) were fully put into effect by 2009, so it is hoped that more research will be carried out in this area.

Exploring how good practice is perceived by those who work with pupils with BESD elucidated issues concerning current practice that future research could focus on, with the added suggestion that the views of pupils are important and must be heard. The views of the participants in this study concerning the circumstances and difficulties these children face, as well as their cultural background, suggest that it is important for them to be given the opportunity in the future to express their views concerning their education. Listening to what the pupils have to say about their schools, their learning their concerns, worries, as well as what makes them happy and motivated, will be key to achieving the goal of better practice in teaching children with BESD.

As Davies (2005: 299) said:

Until professionals learn to listen to the views of all pupils,
legislation alone will not achieve the goal for greater social or
educational inclusion for disaffected or alienated pupils.

As this study has shown, although the perceptions of the participants concerning good practice did include those outlined by Cole et al. (1998), pupils with BESD are still marginalised and their needs are insufficiently met. Where they come from, their deprived and problematic family backgrounds, the challenges they pose to their schools as well as their teachers' views that they are not adequately trained and qualified to work with them are all factors that contribute to this situation. The observation sessions showed that, despite teachers making valid suggestions as to what is important when working with these pupils

(ethos, training and skills, experience, professional support in the classroom and standardised procedures to identify needs and set up ILPs), a great deal of time in school is wasted because the necessary learning support is not in place to enable them to establish such practices in their classrooms.

In order to address this, it is important that future research seeks the views of pupils about their schooling experiences, their feelings about their learning, aspirations for the future and the support they receive for their behavioural difficulties. To not acquire such an alternative perspective on good practice – offered by those who receive the outcomes of teachers' efforts – going forward would be a key oversight.

6.3.2 Pupils being labelled due to cultural and family backgrounds

As seen in this study, pupils identified (for observations) as pupils with BESD were linked with family, ethnic and cultural background (10 out of 16 pupils from different ethnic minority backgrounds and Roma, 3 pupils also from problematic family background). BESD was also most commonly associated with cultural background and family circumstances in interviews.

The links between family circumstances and behaviour difficulties have been widely discussed in literature (Chazan et al., 1994; Greenhalgh, 1994; Laslett, 1997; Bennett, 1999; Royer, 2001; Eisler and Lask, 2008; Jones, 2008 WHO, 2007; Apostolidou, 2004; MOEC, 2006; SWS, 2009; SWS, 2010). Also studies, presented in Chapter 2, suggest strong links between establishing a good home-school relationships and good practice when working with pupils with BESD. At the same time, although there is significant amount of work discussing links between family circumstances and behaviour and how the school can

achieve good practice through fostering school-home links and through involving parents in school activities, no studies were found in literature to explore the same issue, in Cypriot educational context, as well as to investigate systematically links between BESD and family or cultural background of pupils. Moreover no studies were undertaken in Cyprus examining the extent of the issue of labelling pupils as pupils with BESD because of being pupils coming from ethnic or cultural backgrounds which are less 'accepted' by the society in which they live (such as in this case Roma), or because of being pupils coming from family background which is very problematic and carry a social stigma which is again less accepted by the small community of the school itself.

Notwithstanding this, it was not possible in this study to examine why pupils were designated as presenting with BESD. It cannot be ruled out that they had been so labelled because they are Roma. The education of pupils coming from this cultural background was widely commented on by participants and, although authors such Demetriou and Trimikliniotis (2007: 7) have described it as rather 'bleak', with educational authorities not acknowledging the seriousness of situation, the participants have valid reasons for their concerns and comments. Thus, it is important that future research focuses on exploring further the nature and extent of BESD in these two schools, as well as the impact of the BESD label on pupils. Moreover since generalisations cannot be made just from exploring these schools perhaps future studies could also explore wider school populations.

6.3.3 The educational, behavioural, emotional and social difficulties of Roma

In the process of carrying out this study, I came across a pupil population whose learning and behavioural needs have been neglected – the Roma. There is research evidence

concerning what the current situation is for the education of Cypriot Roma pupils (Spyrou, 2004; Demetriou and Trimikliniotis, 2007; Symeou, 2007, Trimikliniotis, Demetriou 2009; Trimikliniotis, Demetriou 2009a). The studies of Demetriou and Trimikliniotis (2007) and Trimikliniotis and Demetriou (2009; 2009a) provide very important information concerning the living conditions of Roma as well as the place of Roma in Cypriot society. Also three studies in particular, the study of Spyrou (2004) and that of Symeou et al., (2009) and that of Trimikliniotis and Demetriou (2009), explore the education of Roma in Cyprus. Symeou et al., (2009:518) stress that the schools are not ready yet to accommodate the needs of Roma pupils and further suggest that:

School efforts should take into consideration the Roma and their values regarding education and should aim to be more sensitive to socially and culturally responsive educational processes.

If issues such as their education, specific learning needs and, especially, BESD are to be addressed effectively, the solution lies in the understanding teachers develop with regard to these pupils' individual traits, cultural characteristics, lifestyle, values, learning needs and the sources of their behavioural difficulties. Further research should be undertaken to explore the educational, behaviour and social difficulties of Roma and how these difficulties become a barrier to their education. Most importantly future studies must examine the efforts of the schools to effectively work with these pupils.

6.4. Concluding remark

Teachers, as it was stated somewhere in literature, are the demanding end (Van De Berg, 2002: 594) – in the delivery of new policies, of governments' new philosophy of education, of initiatives that are introduced in education but most importantly are those who are delivering knowledge and help the cognitive and emotional development of children.

Their personal identities, professional experience and, thus their expertise, together with the experience and expertise of other stakeholders working with the pupils in schools, is extremely important and should be heard wherever and whenever this is needed. They are the driving force for shaping philosophy and for examining practices and for bringing improvements in the existing ones.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: LETTER SENT TO MOEC SEEKING PERMISSION FOR RESEARCH

(translated from the greek)

Tryfonos Stella
School of Education
University of Birmingham
B15 2TT

30th June 2008

To Department of Primary Education
Ministry of Education and Culture
Kimonos & Thoukididou
Nicosia-Cyprus 1434

Subject: Requesting access to primary schools to conduct research

To Whom it may concern

Dear sir or madam

My name is Stella Tryfonos and I am a primary school teacher. I have been working as a teacher for the past seven years, two of which as a headteacher in Greek schools in the UK. At the same time, I am undertaking postgraduate studies at PhD level at the University of Birmingham.

This letter is sent to request permission to conduct a study that aims to explore the notion of ‘good practice’ when working with pupils who present with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD). This study is a case study of mainstream primary schools working under the Priority Education Policy as part of the ZEP programme and seeks to collect interview and observation data.

Together with this letter, you will find, samples of an interview guide, consent form and sample my research proposal. I would be really grateful to be granted permission to conduct the above study, starting the forthcoming school year – September 2008 – and being completed by June 2010.

Yours faithfully,

Stella Tryfonos

APPENDIX 2: LETTER SENT TO PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS

Communication with the schools. The letter followed a telephone conversation and details the purpose of the study and the data-collection process that will be used. It is translated from the original Greek.

Stella Tryfonos
School of Education
University of Birmingham
B15 2TT

8th September 2008

To: Headteacher of Primary school _____

Dear ...

Subject: Teachers and associated professionals working in two ZEP schools' perceptions of good practice when working with pupils with BESD

Following our telephone conversation, I would like to thank you for agreeing to participate in the above study. You have been chosen as a representative school for this study against criteria such as type of school, location and attendance of school by children who present with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD).

For the purposes of this study, I would be grateful for the participation of the teachers of this school in the study as it explores the perspectives of teachers on good practice when working with pupils presenting with BESD. It also explores classroom-level practices and observations will be conducted with teachers working with pupils presenting with BESD. The study will collect data by means of interviews, classroom observations and observation follow-up questionnaires. Permission for this study has been granted by the MOEC and a copy of the permission is sent with this letter (Ref. 7.19.46.6/20, signed 27/08/2008).

I will be in your school the week commencing _____. A plan of the intended procedure was sent to you. If you have any questions or comments please contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Stella Tryfonos

APPENDIX 3: ADDITIONAL COMMUNICATION WITH THE SCHOOLS

(sent to each school two weeks before the visit for the data collection phase)

Stella Tryfonos
School of Education
University of Birmingham
B15 2TT

20/03/2009

To: Headteacher of primary school _____

Subject: Working plan during visit to School.....

Dear ...

First, I would like to thank you once again for agreeing to participate in this study. This letter is sent as a reminder for the forthcoming visit to your school. Given my visit on the and following our telephone conversation, I would like to update you concerning the working plan which will be followed during my visit to your school:

- 1) Briefing session will be given to the teachers explaining the purpose of the study, methods of data collection, code of conduct and commitments of the researcher, role of the participants in the study, completion of consent forms,.
- 2) Briefing will be given to children during the assembly explaining the research
- 3) Interviews and observations will be conducted with teachers consented to participation.

Together with this letter you will receive the following documents:

- 1) Letter for parents of children (next page)
- 2) Working plan with spaces for the teachers to state the day and time convenient to them for the interview and observations
- 3) Consent forms

Yours sincerely,

Stella Tryfonos

APPENDIX 3: ADDITIONAL COMMUNICATION WITH THE SCHOOLS

(CONTINUED)

Stella Tryfonos
School of Education
University of Birmingham

20/03/2009

For the parents of children of _____ primary school.

My name is Stella Tryfonos and I am a teacher and also a research student at the Department of Education of the University of Birmingham in. The week commencing the 02nd of April 2009. I will be in the _____ for collecting data for my research project. Permission for conducting this research and for accessing schools has been granted by the Ministry of Education and Culture on the 27/08/2008 (Reference No.7.19.46.6/20). For this reason I would like to inform you about /my forthcoming visit to the school and the research project that will be undertaken during the visit –my work, its purpose objectives and the process of data collection.

My research focuses on examining how teachers and various professionals in the field of education perceive good practice when working with pupils presenting Behaviour Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD). As part of my work I will be examining the views, of teachers and different professionals working in collaboration with the school, about good practice when working with pupils presenting with BESD. The research involves the whole school, and, as part of the study interviews of teachers and associate professionals and classroom observations will be conducted.

The research process and report of findings

For the second method of data collection, mentioned above, I will undertake classroom observations observing teachers' approaches and pupils' actions during the course of a lesson. Your child will be in the classes involved in the study. Each observation will last eighty minutes. The observations will be conducted through note-taking and no voice or video recording devices will be used. Observation data will be then processed, refined and analysed and the findings will be considered in the research report. No access to raw data will be permitted to any person apart from myself and my two supervisors. In addition all necessary steps will be taken for ensuring anonymity and confidentiality of those participating, whether child or adult.

Researcher's presence in the class, and lesson interruption

All observations will be conducted during lessons and all steps will be taken for not interrupting the normal timetable of the school and classes. The observer will not interfere with the lesson at any case.

The involvement of the whole school in this research is important. However if you have any objection or any question, or you would like to be further informed please do not hesitate to contact the school or the teacher of your child. If you also would like to contact me you can get my contact details from the headteacher of the school.

Yours sincerely
Tryfonos Stella

APPENDIX 4: LETTER FROM THE CYPRIOT CENTRE OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

Following request submitted to the Department of Educational Research and Assessment, MOEC, to receive the first official evaluation study of ZEP schools operating under the Priority Education Policy, I received the following letter and the full research report by Loizidou, Vlami, Nicolaidou (2007). Two conditions are stressed in this letter: a) submission of my Thesis to the CERE and b) provide description of how the study was used.



ΚΥΠΡΙΑΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
ΥΠΟΥΡΓΕΙΟ
ΠΑΙΔΕΙΑΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΟΛΙΤΙΣΜΟΥ

ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΤΙΚΗΣ ΕΡΕΥΝΑΣ ΚΑΙ ΑΞΙΟΛΟΓΗΣΗΣ
2252 Λευκωσία

Αρ. Φακ.: ΚΕΕΑ 7.4.02
Αρ. Τηλ.: 22402317
Αρ. Φαξ: 22480505
e-mail: athmich@cyearm.pi.ac.cy

2 Οκτωβρίου 2008

Κυρία
Στέλλα Τρύφωνος
Αγ. Σοφίας 40
Απ. Ανδρέας
Λεμεσός 3065

Θέμα: Αξιολόγηση του Θεσμού των ΖΕΠ

Αναφορικά με το πιο πάνω θέμα και ως απάντηση στην επιστολή σας στον Διευθυντή Δημοτικής Εκπαίδευσης, σας ενημερώνω ότι η έκθεσή σας αποστέλλεται συνημμένα με την προϋπόθεση ότι:

(α) στην έκθεσή σας δε θα χρησιμοποιήσετε προσωπικά δεδομένα εκπαιδευτικών, μαθητών ή ακόμα και ονόματα σχολείων.

(β) θα κοινοποιήσετε στο Κέντρο Εκπαιδευτικής Έρευνας και Αξιολόγησης (ΚΕΕΑ) τη διδακτορική σας διατριβή, στην οποία θα γίνεται σαφής η αναφορά στην έκθεσή του Π.Ι (όπου αυτή χρησιμοποιείται)

Σας παρακαλώ όπως τηρηθούν οι τα πιο πάνω σε μια προσπάθεια διασφάλισης της ανωνυμίας και σεβασμό στο έργο του Υπουργείου Παιδείας και Πολιτισμού.

Δρ. Αθηνά Μιχαηλίδου
για Διευθυντή
Κέντρου Εκπ/κής Έρευνας και Αξιολόγησης

Κοιν.: ΔΔΕ
ΑΜΠΧ/ΖΕΠ

APPENDIX 5: CONSENT FORM

CONSENT FORM

You are invited to participate in a study entitled *How ‘good practice’ when working with pupils presenting with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD) in school is perceived by practitioners: an exploratory case study of two primary ZEP schools in Cyprus*. Please read this form and feel free to ask any questions you might have.

Details of if you have any more questions:

[Stella Tryfonos]

[University of Birmingham]

[trystella@hotmail.com/ 07912 612115]

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this project. Before we start, I would like to point out the following.

1. The research project involves interviews and observation sessions.

2. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you can withdraw at any time.

3. Confidentiality: in order to protect your anonymity and confidentiality, the intention is to:

- *not discuss or make the names or other personal details of the participants public*
- *Pseudonyms or codes will be substituted for all names and personal details of respondents that appear in the transcripts*
- *tape recordings will be made, but the tapes will be identified by codes and the transcripts will be presented in the study as general themes, not as personal statements*

4. Questions: if you have any questions in relation to the study, please feel free to ask at any point. As far as the interview is concerned, you are also free to not answer any questions if you do not want to.

5. Right to withdraw: involvement in the study is entirely voluntary, so your participation may be refused or withdrawn at any time and any data collected from you will not be used in the study if you do withdraw.

Researcher's statement

I would like to assure you that the interview will be kept strictly confidential and will only be available to me. Any data yielded from observations will also remain confidential. On the analysis of the data and the written report, excerpts of the interviews may be included, but under no circumstances will your personal particulars be included in the final report of the research project.

I would also like to assure you that you have the right to withdraw yourself from participating in this study at any time.

Participants' declaration

By signing this consent form you agree to participate in *one* or *both* of the following:

(please tick the first, second or both boxes below):

Interview	<input type="checkbox"/>
Classroom observation	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please sign this form to confirm that I have read and explained the contents to you.

I have read and understood the description of the research provided by the interviewer. I have been provided with an opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered satisfactorily. I consent to participating in the study described above and a copy of this consent form has been given to me for my records.

Please underline or otherwise specify your status in the school:

**Teacher/speech therapist/SEN teacher/educational psychologist/ZEP coordinator/
headteacher/other**

If other, please specify: _____

X

participant

Name (in capitals):

Date:

Please send a copy of the finished report on the research: YES NO

If YES, please state your address:
.....

APPENDIX 6: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Interview guide: themes and questions

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this study. Before we start, I would like to assure you, first, that your responses will remain completely anonymous and in no circumstances will your name appear with them. Second, no details about you will be revealed in the analysis of your responses.

1. Introduce myself.
2. Introduce the aim of the research.
3. Assure the participant of the process following the collection of data, including the analysis, presentation and discussion of findings.
4. Clarify that he/she may find questions difficult to answer or even silly, but there are no right or wrong answers so he/she must not worry about how to answer them. Explain also that the researcher is interested in collecting perceptions and experiences rather than evaluating his/her work.
5. Ask for permission to record the interview and explain the reason for this if requested.

Note:

1. *If the participant is a teacher, then use Parts A, B, C and D to guide the interview.*
2. *If the participant is not a teacher, then use Parts A, B and C to guide the interview.*

A. GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. I would like first to ask a few questions about you.

	Gender	Male/female
	Qualifications	(Degree, post-grad, PhD, specialism)
If not a teacher	← Current position	Teacher/headteacher/other
	Years worked as a teacher/as.....	
	Years worked at this school	
	Role at the school	
	Current position at the school	
	Years worked in this role	
	Experience in teaching pupils with BESD in this school	Yes/no
	Training related to BESD	Yes/no

ELEMENTS OF GOOD PRACTICE

B. PROVISION OF SUPPORT: IDENTIFICATION, ASSESSMENT AND DECISIONS REGARDING SUPPORT

1. How do you understand the term BESD [Πώς καταλαμβαίνεις τον όρο BESD]?

- Do you think there are any factors that contribute to causing BESD and, if any, which? [Πού νομίζεις ότι οφείλονται τα προβλήματα συμπεριφοράς των παιδιών αυτών]

2. What do you understand by the term ‘good practice’ when working with pupils with BESD? [Πώς καταλαμβαίνεις τον όρο ‘καλή πρακτική’ στην στήριξη παιδιών με προβλήματα συμπεριφοράς]

3. How is identification assessment and decision for provision procedure for pupils presenting with BESD delivered in this school?

- Are there any particular guidelines in place? Yes/no
[Υπάρχουν συγκεκριμένες κατευθυντήριες γραμμές σχετικά με την διάγνωση των προβλημάτων των παιδιών αυτών **Nai/oxi**]
- In what ways do professionals from different disciplines (i.e., SEN, EPD, LEA, SWS) get involved in this process? [Με ποιό τρόπο οι διάφορες ειδικότητες εμπλέκονται στην διαδικασία αυτή]

- **Is this effective?** [Νομίζεις ότι η διαδικασία είναι αποτελεσματική]
- **What follows?** [Τι ακολουθεί]

C. SCHOOL-LEVEL PRACTICES AND PEOPLE INVOLVED

4. **What practices have been developed at school level that enhance good practice?**
 - **What actions are taken at school which for working with pupils / pupil presenting with BESD?** [Δράσεις σε επίπεδο σχολείου για στήριξη και ενθάρυνση των των μαθητών με προβλήματα συμπεριφοράς]
 - **What is the role of the family in this?** [Ο ρόλος της οικογένειας ποιος είναι]
 - **Are there any emerging issues from actions?**
 - **How would you describe practices developed at school level?** [Πως θα περιγράφες τις δράσεις που έχουν γίνει σε επίπεδο σχολείου]
5. **How do you see the support that these pupils receive at school level?**
 - **Which people (i.e., LEA, SWS, SEN) and other local bodies are involved in the school?** [Συνεργάζεστε με κάποιες υπηρεσίες του Υπουργείου, ή ειδικούς επιστήμονες για τη στήριξη των παιδιών αυτών]
 - **How do you think partnerships with these people affect the teachers and their teaching?** [Πως νομίζεις η συνεργασία πολλών ειδικοτήτων στο σχολείο επηρεάζει την διδασκαλία και τους εκπαιδευτικούς όταν διδάσκουν]

D. CLASSROOM-LEVEL PRACTICES: TEACHERS WORKING WITH PUPILS WITH BESD

6. **What approaches are used to deal with these pupils in the classroom?**
 - **From the experience you possess in working with pupils with BESD in this school, you probably have had incidents with them that caused you concern. How did you deal with them?** [Από την εμπειρία σου που έχεις να δουλεύεις με παιδιά υπήρξαν περιπτώσεις που σε προβλημάτισαν, με παιδιά ή με το συγκεκριμένο παιδί. Με ποιο τρόπο αντιμετώπισες αυτές/η τις περιπτώσεις/η]

- **How do you usually deal with problems with these pupils during lessons?** [Συνήθως με ποιο τρόπο αντιμετωπίζεις τα προβλήματα των παιδιών με προβλήματα συμπεριφοράς]

- **In what ways do you think external support would help you during lessons (i.e., TA, EP, SEN teacher)?** [Με ποιο τρόπο νομίζεις εξωτερική στήριξη θα μπορούσε να σε βοηθήσει την ώρα του μαθήματος]

- **In what way do you think the needs of pupils with behavioural difficulties could be best addressed in the classroom?** [Με ποιο τρόπο νομίζεις ότι θα βοηθούνταν καλύτερα τα παιδιά με δυσκολίες συμπεριφοράς]

- **What do you think works with these pupils?** [Τι νομίζεις ότι δουλεύει αποτελεσματικά με τα παιδιά αυτά]

- **How do you work with pupils presenting with BESD in the classroom** [Πώς εργάζεσαι με τα παιδιά που παρουσιάζουν προβλήματα συμπεριφοράς].

- **Your role as a teacher? In what way do you think helps to work more effectively with the pupil?** [Ο ρόλος σου ως εκπαιδευτικός, πώς νομίζεις ότι μπορεί να βοηθήσει να εργάζεσαι πιο αποτελεσματικά με το μαθητή]

- **Do you think that your teaching approach works with pupils with BESD?** [Νομίζεις ότι η προσέγγιση που ακολουθείς στο μάθημα σου είναι αποτελεσματική με τα παιδιά που αντιμετωπίζουν προβλήματα συμπεριφοράς]

Thank you for your time and patience.

APPENDIX 7: OBSERVATION FORM

Part A was completed with the teacher in advance, Part B during the observation session

Lesson observation

Part A: Information about the lesson **(BEFORE THE LESSON)**

Grade/class	
Date	
Pupil's ethnic background	
Pupil/s with BESD	
Teacher	
Male/Female	
Duration of lesson	
Support in the class	
Subject of the lesson	
Observation No. for this teacher	1 st 2 nd
Gender of pupil to be observed	B G
Description of pupil's behaviour	
Have the pupil's difficulties been officially assessed and identified	YES NO

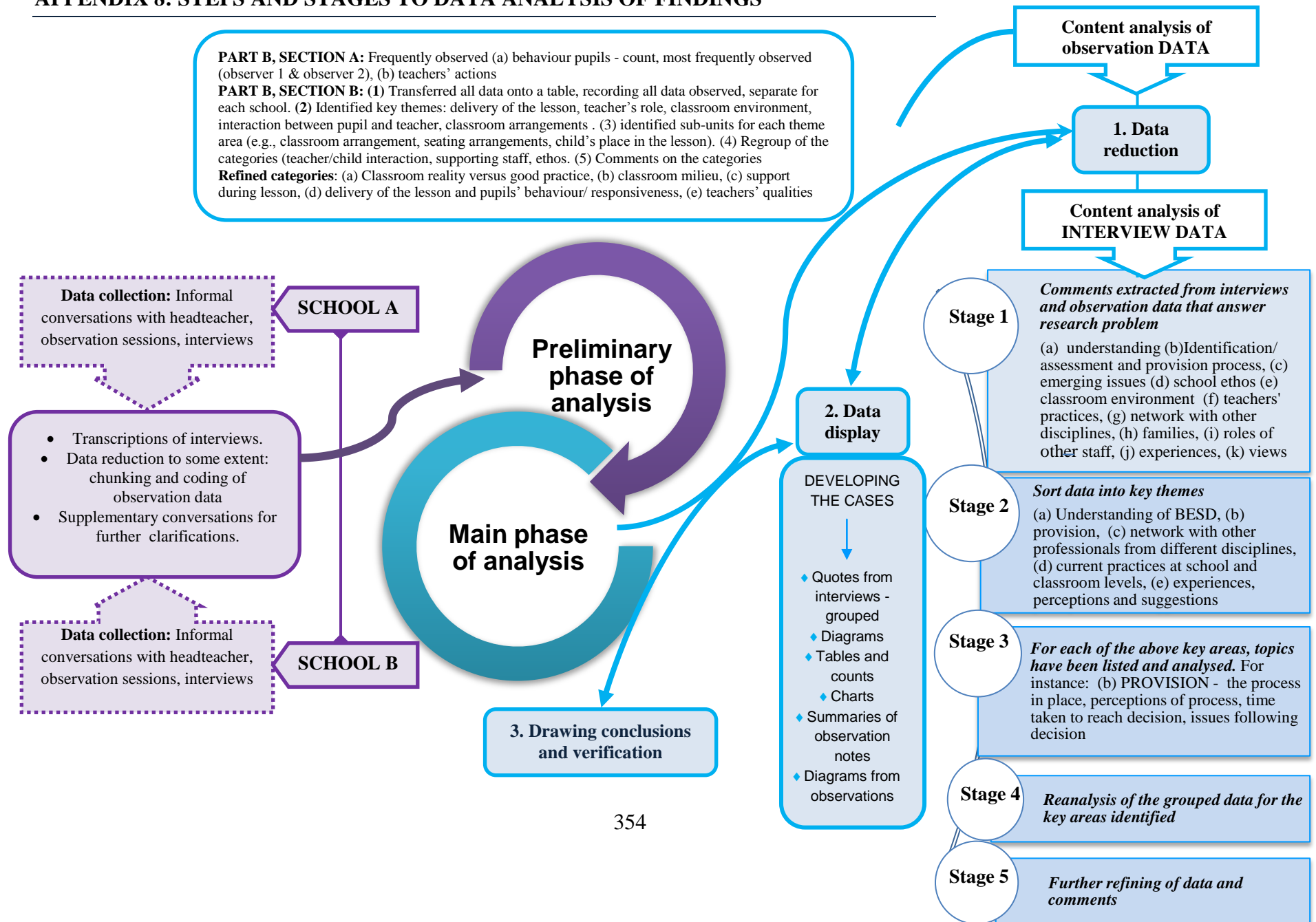
If YES please describe:.....

Information on lesson planning	Yes/No	Comments
Teacher has provided a teaching plan		
General information about the lesson		
Resources/facilities available		

Part B: Observation (DURING THE LESSON – to be completed by observer)

Lesson subject: _____																					
Section A	Pupil's progress:																				
	On task = 1																				
	Off task = 2																				
	Disruptive = 3																				
	Aggressive = 4																				
	Other = 5 (specify)																				
	Teacher:																				
	Explains task=1																				
	Opens discussion =2																				
	Provides support=3																				
	Praise/ positive comments/ motivational incentives=4																				
	Reminding rules, contract of good behaviour=5																				
	Other (specify)=6																				
	Time interval – 4 min	4	8	12	16	20	24	28	32	36	40	44	48	52	56	60	64	68	72	76	80
	Time:	Notes about the lesson with regard to pupil being observed																			
Section B																					

APPENDIX 8: STEPS AND STAGES TO DATA ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS



APPENDIX 9: FORM FOR COLLECTING INFORMATION ABOUT THE TWO SCHOOLS

School B	A1	A2	A3	B1	B2	B3	Γ1	Γ2	Γ3	Δ1	Δ2	Δ3	E1	E2	Στ1	Στ2	Στ3	Totals	Average
Pupils																			
Pupils whose mother tongue is not Greek																			
Pupils suspected or identified as having BESD																			
Referrals to EPD																			
Families supported by SWS	... families									...families									...families
Cases of pupils receiving support from a TA (synodo)																			
Cases of pupils receiving support from an SEN teacher																			
Which professionals are in direct contact and collaborate with the school?	EPD, SWS officers, SEN teachers, TAs, EPs, speech therapists																		
School A	A1			B1			Γ1			Δ1	Δ2	E1	E2	Στ1	Στ2	Totals	Average		
Pupils																			
Pupils whose mother tongue is not Greek																			
Pupils suspected or identified as having BESD																			
Referrals to EPD																			
Families supported by SWS	...families									...families									...families
Cases of pupils receiving support from a TA (synodo)																			
Cases of pupils receiving support from an SEN teacher																			
Which professionals are in direct contact and collaborate with the school?	EPD, SWS officers, SEN teachers, TAs, speech therapists, interpreter																		

APPENDIX 10: INDIVIDUAL CODE OF GOOD BEHAVIOUR

Given to pupils with behavioural difficulties in School A.

-----SCHOOL OF -----

CODE OF GOOD BEHAVIOUR



SCHOOL YEAR 2008–2009

(Page 2)

Rules for good behaviour

1. I will come to school every day tidy. I will also do my homework every week before coming to school.
2. My school bag will always be tidy and will contain the books for that day only.
3. I will solve any issues I have with my peers peacefully, through dialogue and based on democratic principles.
4. I will respect and keep my school clean.
5. I will make use of the toilets and the litter bins.
6. Soon after the break, I will make sure I will go to class. I will go into the classroom carefully, sit quietly at my desk, then unpack the appropriate books for the lesson that will follow.
7. I will not swear, yell or do hand gestures. I will not throw stones and other objects.
8. I will play with all the children in the school.

(Page 3)

Rewards for good behaviour

1. The name and surname of the pupil will be on public display.
2. The name of the pupil will be written in the achievement record book.
3. Each month, the class with the most recorded pupil achievements will be granted an award (such as treats, golden time)

Consequences of bad behaviour

1. A written record of the behaviour will be given to the pupil by the teacher.
2. A record of the behaviour will be kept in the behaviour record book. After three serious offences, the pupil will be cut out from one of the activities that takes place outside the school's grounds.
3. The pupil will miss breaktimes and will be closely supervised by the teacher during that time.
4. The teacher will inform the pupil's parents of the bad behaviour.
5. The pupil's parents will be called and asked to come to school and speak with the headteacher.
6. If the offence relates to damage deliberately caused by the pupil, the pupil will pay for the repair.
7. A pupil who dirties the environment of the school will clean it up.

(Page 4)

I am _____ a pupil in _____ class at _____ Primary School.

My aim is to become better every day, because that way I will be able to help myself, the society in which I live and my country. For this reason I accept the rules above and I promise to stick to them. If I break the rules, I will accept the consequences mentioned above.

Signature of pupil

The headteacher of the school, the teachers and the parents of the pupil agree with the behavioural rules above and will try to support the pupil in complying with them.

Headteacher




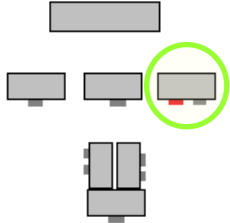
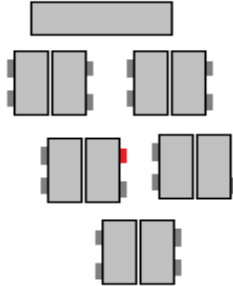
Teachers

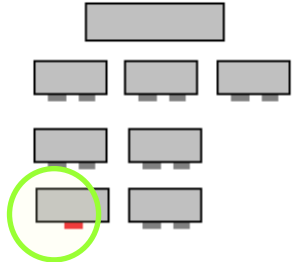
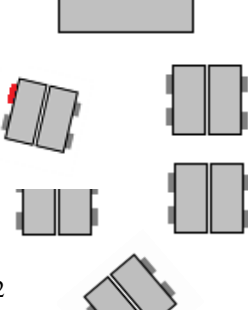
Parents


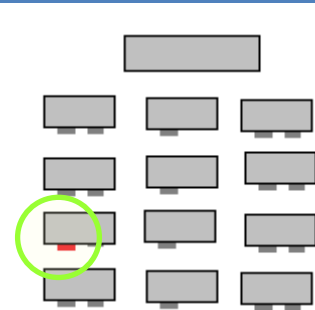
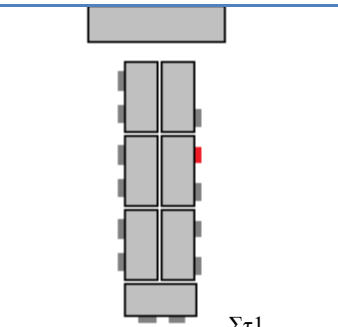
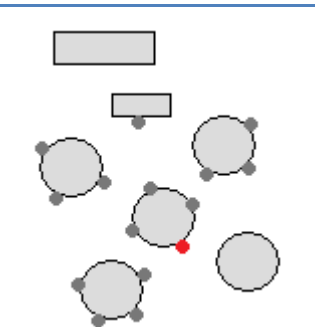
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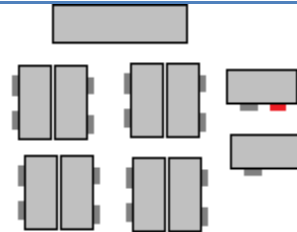
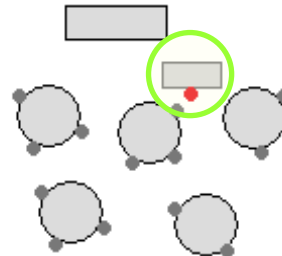
APPENDIX 11: SAMPLE OF NOTES MADE DURING AN OBSERVATION SESSION

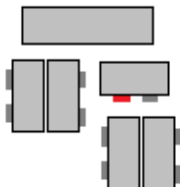
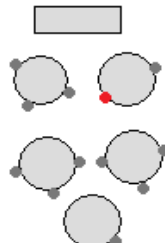

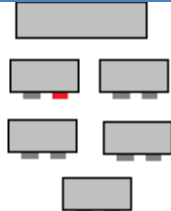
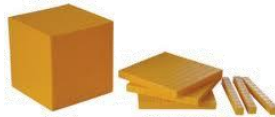
Seating arrangements are noted, how the teacher worked with the pupil, information about the lesson, as well as the pupil's behaviour

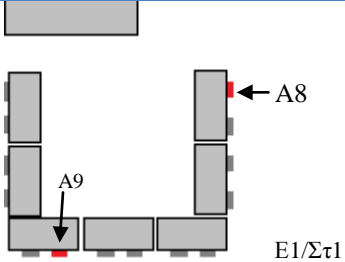
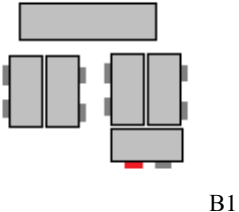
SCHOOL A			SCHOOL B		
Obs.	Classroom organisation	Notes on the lessons observed	Obs.	Classroom organisation	Notes on the lessons observed
Guide:  no interview  resources other than textbooks  pupil sitting alone					
A1	 <p style="text-align: right;">Στ2</p> <p>Lesson: Maths Lesson Materials: Maths Books, text books</p> <p>2 observ. courses @40 minutes Recordings:</p>	<p>Teacher: pp Pupil: Girl/ Roma</p> <p>The pupil seemed to be withdrawn, no engagement to the lesson. She holds a book different than the books the rest of the class has, works by herself. The seating place she is in does not help her to socialise in the class. She is sitting next to a pupil who has identified SEN (according to the teacher). The teacher mentioned at the beginning that the attendance of this girl in the school is not systematic and in some cases she comes for one month regularly and then the next month she might be away for a long time. It was also pointed out that this was one of the major issues for this girl regarding her progress</p>	B1	 <p>Δ1</p> <p>Lesson: Maths (1@40)/ English (1@40) Lesson Materials: Maths Books, posters, computers</p> <p>2 observ. courses @40 minutes</p>	<p>Teacher: ff Pupil: Boy/ Africa</p> <p>Lesson started with discussion and pupils are working in groups. Pupils from other than Greek ethnic backgrounds are scattered to all the groups. The pupil is encouraged to interact with the rest of the group. Teacher uses praise and encouragement to redirect the pupil back to his work while also reminds him of the behaviour target that they had agreed together. Teacher agreed to allow the pupil to play on the computer when showing effort in the class. The English lesson started with a big poster on the board a game opened to all pupils. The objective was to introduce the question: "Is it a/an" the pupil was fully engaged during the last 40 minutes of the lesson</p>

A2	 <p>A1</p> <p>Lesson: Literacy Lesson Materials: Literacy Books, text books 1 obs. course @ 60 minutes</p>	<p>Teacher: no interview Pupil: Boy/ Roma</p> <p>The boy sits at the end of the classroom by himself. He came to the classroom very late when the lesson was about to start (pupil usually have to be at school at 7:45 am)and the teacher did not address him at all. Did not engage with the lesson, at some point he also lied down on the desk. The teacher did not provide any individual support to the pupil during the course of observation appart from asking the boy persistently to open his books... He appears disruptive for almost 15 minutes interpting in the lesson, seeking attention from another pupil next to him, and then completely off task and ignoring the teacher.</p> <p>After 60 minutes of observation the teacher asked the two observers to leave the classroom although initially accepted for the full course of observation 2@40m. The observation lasted for 60 minutes</p>	B2	 <p>Στ2</p> <p>Lesson: Ma. actions/ Literacy 2 observ. courses @40 minutes Lesson Materials: Books, textbooks, video presentation Power point presentations by pupils.</p>	<p>Teacher: cc Pupil: Boy/ Cypriot</p> <p>The Boy is sitting next to a pupil who presents behaviour difficulties (the teacher explained this at the end of the observation). The pupils of this classroom had to work mainly on Fractions for the first 40', while the rest of the lesson they were working on Literacy(the last 40') . Meanwhile, despite that on the first half of the observation course the boy was disturbing other pupils, in the second half of the lesson his behaviour changed dramatically. The teacher was providing a lot of encouragement and individual support. However this was not the only reason. The pupil was allowed to use the computer to present his work. During there were three tasks apart from the discussion on the lesson.... (a) role-playing task (based on the story in the text book and the pupils should reproduce the story and think of another ending) started and the teacher encouraged the boy to take part . (b) The pupils were assigned a project which was due today. The project was about conducting a research about the consequences of world war II and create a power point presentation and present it in the classroom (c) The projects of pupils were followed by a presentation of a short documentary about the consequences of WWII and was followed by discussion and comparison with what the pupils have presented. The boy completed an outstanding presentation and it seems that he worked had to do it.</p>
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<p>A3</p>	 <p>E2</p> <p>Lesson: Literacy- Geography-Countries of Europe- England Travel to 2438 BC Lesson Materials: Literacy Books, computers 2 observ. courses @40 minutes OFFICIALLY IDENTIFIED: SEN BUT NOT SPECIFIED</p>	<p>Teacher: mm Pupil: Boy/Roma While the rest of the class works on a story project (combining a computer and textbook work) the pupil is seated by the Computer next to a Roma pupil and works by himself on something irrelevant to the lesson (on the internet). Teacher did provide some redirection to the pupil but gave up doing this very quickly. During the second half of the lesson the pupil was working on the computer searching on the internet. For the rest of the lesson the pupil was just playing in the classroom or interrupting other pupils. At the end of the observation the teacher described the child as a child with behaviour and emotional difficulties coming from Roma background, and displaying various problems in and out of the classroom (mostly relating to his behaviour)</p>	<p>B3</p>	 <p>E2</p> <p>Lesson: Literacy (2@40') Lesson Materials: Pictures for cutting and sticking, text books, posters 2 observ. courses @40 minutes</p>	<p>Teacher: aa Pupil: Boy/ Cypriot The aim of the lesson was: a) to summarise the outcomes of a project carried out by the students the previous day and b) to complete a task relating to the project. The pupil is sitting alone but during this lesson was moving around. The teacher tries to redirect him back to task, but unsuccessfully. Then the teacher starts writing something on the board. The pupil continues to disrupt other pupils, playing and paying no attention to the lesson. Teacher also discusses the boy's behaviour with the pupil. The teacher again goes close to the pupil and helps him with his work cutting and sticking the pictures on the poster the pupils had to make. For the rest of the lesson the teachers stayed with the boy and kept providing instructions for the lesson from there</p>
<p>A4</p>	 <p>Στ1</p> <p>Lesson: Maths 2X40' Lesson Materials: Maths Book 2observ. courses @40 minutes OFFICIALLY IDENTIFIED:</p>	<p>Teacher: no interview Pupil: Boy/ Roma As soon as the bell rang the pupil came in the classroom holding his sandwich and eating. He went to his seat and he continued eating from there He started working on his language material but stopped after around 10 minutes. After some time he gave up his task and stopped working completely. The teacher rarely was addressing the pupil during lesson, and he excluded himself from tasks from most of the tasks tasks since these required team-work. The pupil next to this boy was Roma and had identified learning and behaviour difficulties</p>	<p>B4</p>	 <p>Γ1</p> <p>Lesson: Science Lesson Materials: Posters/ Books/ Key-words, 2 observ. courses @40 minutes</p>	<p>Teacher: jj Pupil: Boy/ Cypriot Lesson is about endemic species. The learning objectives were mainly instructionally delivered by the teacher. The boy with BESD moves around in the class and does not engage to the task the rest of the class works on. The teacher approaches the pupil and tries to redirect back to task The teacher tried different strategies to motivate the pupil to participate in the activities, such as assigning responsibilities, making new seating arrangements</p>

BEHAVIOUR DISORDER	
A5	<div></div> <p>Lesson: Literacy 2X40'</p> <p>Lesson Materials: Literacy Book</p> <p>2 observ. courses @40 minutes</p>
	<p>Teacher: no interview</p> <p>Pupil: Boy/Roma</p> <p>The boy is seated at the front row of the class close to the teacher, and next to a pupil with SEN (according to the teacher). The rest of the class is organised in groups.</p> <p>The boy was very disruptive during the course of observations and challenged the teacher by seeking attention, being loud and by disrupting other pupils. Despite of this, however, during a role-playing task, he was fully concentrated up to the time of the writing part of the task. At this point the boy presented a difficulty to concentrate and gave up. The teacher was trying most of the time to provide individual support (e.g. addressing or sitting next to him and working on his task) and to encourage the pupil to engage with the lesson. However, due to additional language difficulties the efforts of the teacher were not very successful.</p>
B5	<div></div> <p>A1</p> <p>Lesson: Literature</p> <p>Lesson Materials: Posters from the lesson, cards and phrases, puppets, role playing materials</p> <p>2 observ. courses @40 minutes</p>
	<p>Teacher: ee</p> <p>Pupil: Boy/ Rumania</p> <p>This presented to be a very interactive and interesting lesson for the pupils. The nature of the lesson and the approach of the teacher seems to have helped the boy to be engaged with the lesson for most of the time.</p> <p>The boy although described by the teacher as very aggressive, was fully involved in the activities especially the ones relating to role- playing and storytelling. The teacher, instead of verbally directing the pupils to certain tasks, used visual reminders similar to those presented in their literacy book and also drew smiley faces on the board.</p> <p>The learning objectives were delivered in a very creative way. Mixing up of phrase cards, hiding of words from the lesson and pupils were called to replace them with others, say the story in a different way, make their own story. A lot of encouragement was given and a lot of individual support.</p> <p>These images, posters and smiley faces which routinely appeared during the lesson and which seemed to be familiar helped the boy who has difficulties in understanding the language.</p>

<p>A6</p>	 <p>Lesson: Maths 2X40' Lesson Materials: Maths Book, computer 2 observ. courses @40 minutes</p>	<p>Teacher: ss Pupil: Boy/Roma The pupil cannot work on his book tasks due to language difficulties and the teacher provides very little support during the lesson. The boy is sitting at the front row of the classroom next to another pupil with similar difficulties and also Roma. The teacher works on the computer and presents the lesson through it. The pupil has an additional book which he uses when he receives language support. Instead of working like the rest of the class and taking part in the lesson he is working on the tasks that he was given for the language lesson. The boy does not work on any of the tasks assign by the teacher. He is working on his book and when not working on his book he tries to draw attention on him and disrupts other pupils.</p>	<p>B6</p>	 <p>Lesson: Maths Lesson Materials: Posters, overhead projector, fraction blocks, Unifix Blocks, text book 2 observ. courses @40 minutes</p> 	<p>Teacher: vv Pupil: Boy/ Cypriot The pupil was sitting close to the teacher and the teacher was able to provide redirection and individual support constantly. In a number of cases the pupil was off task and the teacher provided a lot of individual support, especially when the pupil was off task and disruptive. Knowing the interest of the boy for computers, the teacher assigned him responsibilities during presentation of the new lesson through the projector.</p> <p>OFFICIALLY IDENTIFIED: LEARNING DIFFICULTIES</p>
<p>A7</p>	 <p>Lesson: Literacy 2X80' Lesson Materials: Maths Book, computer software, Dienes blocks 2 observ. courses @40 minutes</p> 	<p>Teacher: rr Pupil: Boy-Kurdish/ Roma* The pupil was sitting at the front close to the teacher's desk with another pupil. The teacher was very encouraging throughout the lesson. In addition the teacher was constantly addressing the child and offering individual support during carrying out the task, as well as assigning responsibilities especially during maths(e.g. giving out textbooks, Dienes blocks to other pupils, present the answer to a task). That is because despite the behaviour and the language difficultie the child presented very good in maths and very enthousiasted about maths lesson. Despite the behaviour was very challenging for some parts of the lesson , the child presented fully engaged with the lesson during maths. *the headteacher considered this pupil Roma, however the teacher stated that he is Kurdish and his family Turkish speaking</p>			

<p>A8 A9</p>	 <p>E1/Στ1</p> <p>Lesson: Music Class E1 (1@40') A8 Music Class Στ'1 (1@40') A9 Lesson Materials: sponge balls, musical instruments, board pens, desks</p> <p>2 observ. courses @40 minutes</p>	<p>Teacher: qq Pupil: Boy (A8), Boy (A9) Desks were interactive and the teacher handed the pupils board pens. Desks were used as a pentagram. The pupils with BESD were during both lessons, fully engaged. The teacher allowed them to sit in a place of their choice. The lesson started with music and a game with sponge balls which pupils seemed familiar with and through the game the teacher introduced the lesson objectives. Made use of praise and encouragement a lot, as well as individual support with the musical instruments. Pupils were fully engaged in the lesson in both observations</p>	<p>A10</p>	 <p>B1</p> <p>Lesson: Maths 2X80' Lesson Materials: Maths Book and board</p> <p>2 observ. courses @40 minutes</p>	<p>Teacher: no interview Pupil: Boy/ Cypriot The class was working on addition and the teacher provided lots of activities to introduce her learning objective. There were four different tasks during the lesson and to some extent were holding pupil's interest..On the writing part of the lesson the teacher provided individual support..There was an incident with a pupil in the class and this boy was involved, started a fight during the lesson and the teacher just tried to talk with the pupil. Shortly after this the lesson continued, but the boy with BESD refused to carry on, despite the teacher's constant encouragement. The pupil spent the majority of the lesson just being uncooperative and did not just refused to engage in tasks despite teachers encouragement</p>
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APPENDIX 12: SAMPLE OF OBSERVATION RECORDINGS

Observation Code	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8/A9	A10	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	B6
Subjects	Maths 2@40min	Literacy 2@40min	Literacy 2@40min	Maths 2@40min	Literacy 2@40min	Literacy 2@40min	Maths 2@40min	Music 2@40	Literacy 2@40min	Maths/Eng 2@40	Maths/Liter. 2@40	Literacy 2@40min	Science 2@40min	Literacy 2@40min	Maths 2@40min
BOY/GIRL	Girl	Boy	Boy	Boy	Boy	Boy	Boy	Boy	Boy	Boy	Boy	Boy	Boy	Boy	Boy
Approaches/ GradeClass	St2	A1	E2	St1	D1	E1	C1	St1/E1	B1	D1	St2	E2	C1	A1	B3
Explains Task	6	6	2	5	5	6	6	7	2	2	4	5	2	0	2
Opens discussion/Talks	5	4	5	6	4	12	0	5	4	3	3	2	3	5	0
Provides Individual Support	6	0	8	6	0	0	8	5	8	8	4	9	12	7	9
Behaviour incentives (praise, positive comments, encouragement)	3	4	5	0	3	2	4	1	3	6	6	0	1	7	6
Reminding rules/behaviour contract	0	1	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	1
Other	0	0	0	3	0	0	2	2	3	0	3	2	2	1	2
Total Recordings	20	15	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20

PUPILS/ Observation Code	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8/A9	A10	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	B6
On task	5	1	3	6	2	1	11	14	6	15	12	4	7	11	12
Off task	15	11	8	10	5	12	4	0	10	4	3	9	5	4	5
Disruptive	0	3	8	0	9	6	2	4	4	1	2	7	5	3	3
Aggressive	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	3	0	0
Other	0	0	1	4	4	1	3	0	0	0	3	0	0	2	0
Total	20	15	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20

APPENDIX 12 (continued from previous page)

Analysis of observations, counts and frequencies

Teachers' approaches	TOTAL COUNTS			PERCENTAGES		
	School A	School B	Both	School A	School B	Both
Explains Task	45	15	60	25.71%	12.50%	20.34%
Opens discussion/Talks	45	16	61	25.71%	13.33%	20.68%
Provides Individual Support	41	49	90	23.43%	40.83%	30.51%
Behaviour incentives (praise, positive comments, encouragement)	25	26	51	14.29%	21.67%	17.29%
Reminding rules/behaviour contract	9	4	13	5.14%	3.33%	4.41%
Other	10	10	20	5.71%	8.33%	6.78%
Total Recordings	175	120	295			

Pupils Behaviour	TOTAL COUNTS			PERCENTAGES		
	School A	School B	Both	School A	School B	Both
On task	49	61	110	28.00%	50.83%	37.29%
Off task	75	30	105	42.86%	25.00%	35.59%
Disruptive	36	21	57	20.57%	17.50%	19.32%
Aggressive	2	3	5	1.14%	2.50%	1.69%
Other	13	5	18	7.43%	4.17%	6.10%
Total	175	120	295			

APPENDIX 13: FORM USED TO REFER PUPILS TO THE EPD

Κ.Δ.Π. 185/2001

**ΠΑΡΑΡΤΗΜΑ
(Κανονισμός 4(2))**

**Παραπομπή παιδιού στην Επαρχιακή Επιτροπή Ειδικής Αγωγής και
Εκπαίδευσης**

APPENDIX (POLICY 4 (2))

Referral of child to the District Committee of Special Education

District

1. Information about the child

First name and surname:

.....

Date of birth:

School attending (if child at school): Tel:

2. Information about the family:

Father's first name and surname:

.....

Profession: Work tel:

Mother's first name and surname:

.....

Profession: Work tel:

Home address: Home tel:

3. Details of the child's problems/difficulties:

.....

.....

.....

.....

..... Details of person who is requesting the assessment

First name and surname:

.....

Profession:

.....

Work address: Work tel:

Home address: Home tel:

Signature:

Signature of superior of this person (if any):

Child's profile

Part A: Personal details of child

[...]

(To be completed according to the directions given in the letter you have received.)

First name and surname:

Date of birth:

Place of birth:

Father's name:

Father's date of birth:

Father's origin:

Father's education:

Father's profession:Home tel:

Work tel:

Mother's name:

Mother's date of birth:

Mother's origin:

Mother's education:

Mother's profession:Home tel:

Work tel:

Home address:

Family status: Married/divorced/separated

Number of children in the family:

Names of children:

Dates of birth:

Part B: Medical information

Pregnancy

Details:

Labour:

Basic stages of growth:

Childhood illnesses:

..

Accidents:

Fits/seizures/epilepsy:

..

Vaccinations:

Medical check-ups:

..

Medical history:

Any long-term/short-term medication the child is taking:

Part C: Information regarding present situation

Dietary habits:

Sleep:

Phobias:

Tendencies/obsessions:

Sight:

Hearing:

Speech:

Abilities/awareness of condition:

Part D: Social aspects

Child's relationship parents:

Child's relationship with brothers/ sisters:

Relationship with rest of family:

..

Overall behaviour:

Part E: Behaviour in school

A. School

School attending and year group level:

Previous school attended (if different):

B. General comments

Literacy level:

Numeracy level:

Speech:

Skills:

Writing skills:

Part F: Any special interests of the child

.....
.....

Part G: Further significant information about the child

.....

APPENDIX 14: INFORMATION ABOUT THE PUPIL POPULATION IN THE TWO SCHOOLS

(as reported during the data collection process)

(A) NATIONALITIES

Country	School A	School B (KA) & (KB)	School A	School B (KA) & (KB)
Bulgaria	1	3	0.85%	1.01%
Cyprus	47	251	40.17%	84.51%
Egypt	0	3	0.00%	1.01%
Georgia	0	12	0.00%	4.04%
Greece	0	3	0.00%	1.01%
Kurdistan	7	0	5.98%	0%
Other*	4	15	3.42%	5.05%
Roma	55	0	47.01%	0%
Romania	0	5	0.00%	1.68%
Syria	3	5	2.56%	1.68%
	117	297		

(B) GENERAL INFORMATION

pupils	School A	School B (KA) & (KB)	School A	School B (KA) & (KB)
non-native speakers	55	43	47.01%	14.47%
presenting with BESD	27	28	23.07%	9.43%
referred to EPD	13	11	11.11%	3.70%
receiving support by TA (synodo)	1	5	0.01%	1.68%
receiving support by SEN teacher	9	15	7.69%	5.05%
Average number per class	14	17		